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THE LOST SHIP;

OR,

WISE FOR A SHADOW.

BY ROGER STARBUCK,

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THE LOST SHIP.

CHAPTER I.

ADrift.

It was a bad night for vessels in the Kamtchatka sea. The wind howled and shrieked like wolves and hyenas; the spray of the great waves was whirled hissing through the air, and drifting fragments of ice—huge blocks and columns—were tossed against each other, crashing like an avalanche.

Fortunately there were now but few vessels remaining in the sea. It was the middle of October, at which period most northern whalers are well on their way toward the Sandwich Islands. One of the exceptions mentioned was the ship *Norwich*, commanded by Thomas Camp, an ambitious young man who, having discovered an excellent whaling-ground in an unfrequented bay far to the north, had, in opposition to the wishes of his old mate, Mr. Gibbs, determined not to leave it until his craft was filled.

Now he had reason to feel sorry that he had not taken the old sailor's advice; for the *Norwich*, although both anchors were down, was dragging toward a rocky headland that projected from the north-east extremity of the bay. The night was quite dark, but the rugged outlines of the cliff, with clouds of foaming spray leaping around its base, could be distinguished by the anxious seamen bending over the rails; while astern of them, and off the lee beam, the tossed blocks and pillars of ice were seen, like white-robed sprites come to witness the destruction of the lone ship. Although every stitch of canvas was furled, the three masts, bending like willow sticks, snapped and cracked with every plunge of the vessel, while the cable, tautening every time her head rose, made every timber creak and moan as if about to part. Enveloped in clouds of flying spray, and occasionally drenched

by the heavy seas that swept the vessel, the situation of the crew was very uncomfortable; but they scarcely heeded cold or wet with that fearful jagged precipice ahead of them.

Soon the captain and his mate decided to get up anchors, and endeavor to weather the point. The wind being north-east-half-east, they hoped they might make sail in time to clear the dangerous current which, partially favored by the gale, was rapidly setting toward the rocks. The necessary orders were given, and the shivering seamen sprung with alacrity to the brakes, glad of the opportunity for exercise. They worked with a will, and the anchors soon were lifted. The main-topsail (close-reefed), the mainsail, the foresail and the spanker, were then set, and the *Norwich*, answering her helm, tore through the wild waters, roaring like a mad bull.

"Close—keep her close, there!" cried Camp, his clear voice ringing like cymbals, as he stood upon the knightheads, his dark hair flowing from his flushed cheeks, and his tall form bent eagerly forward.

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the man at the helm.

Crack! snap! crash! and down came the main-topmast, falling over the lee bulwarks and dragging them under.

Then the ship plunged fearfully; a tremendous sea broke over the forward rail, and the young captain, springing backward, clutched the cable just in time to prevent himself from being washed overboard. He fancied he heard a half-smothered shriek, however, as the sea rolled surging and splashing aft. At the same moment the vessel fell off, and, jumping on the windlass, Camp saw the jagged wall of the precipice, lighted by the phosphorus gleam of the sea, nearly three ships' lengths ahead.

"Where are you going to?" he shrieked.

"Ay, where is he going to?" growled the old mate, rushing to the binnacle.

The wheel was deserted; the helmsman had been washed overboard.

Gibbs shook his head ominously, as he seized the spokes.

"No use of telling the men of it now," he muttered.

"Clear the wreck, there," he added, hoarsely.

He was promptly obeyed.

Meanwhile, booming on with tremendous velocity, with the

wind buzzing and humming in her rigging, her masts cracking and snapping, and her timbers reeling, the ship refused to come up more than a quarter of a point. Her bows having fallen off as described, had been caught by the current where it was strongest; it forced her back every time the mate attempted to luff. Her flying jib-boom was almost on a line with the dreaded point.

Camp rushed aft, shouting, "You infernal lubber!" and was surprised to find his old officer at the wheel.

The mate smiled grimly.

"It's no use; she's a doomed craft," said he. "God forgive ye, Camp, for not taking my advice."

"I wish I had," cried the young man, frankly. "But we may weather that point yet. There's an east current less than a ship's length from the rocks that may carry us around 'em."

"Ay; but the water isn't deep enough there to float us; its *there* that we'll strike."

The men were now upon the quarter-deck, awaiting the fearful moment. The light of the binnacle lamp flashed upon the dark face of the Sandwich Islander, the fierce-looking Malay, the sturdy Englishman, and the long-limbed Yankee—all nerving themselves for the expected shock. Clinging to ropes and rigging, the islanders hung far over the rails, their eyeballs flaming through the darkness, and their set teeth showing as white as the foam hissing around the base of the cliff.

A heavy sea lifted the ship upon its crest; for a moment it seemed as if it would hurl her upon the rocks. Not so, however; her bows were buried almost to her tryworks, and she dashed on. A moment later, a scraping and thumping was heard along the bottom of the vessel; then, caught among the eddies and ripples of the east current, she was drawn with almost incredible swiftness on a course parallel with the rocks.

The old mate set his teeth hard, down went his wheel, and like a shot, the ship was whirled past and around the dreaded point.

The wild Kanakas clapped their hands, the Malays grinned with delight, the captain looked triumphant.

Meanwhile, booming on, with the wind screaming in her

rigging louder than ever, the ship tore through the mad waters, leaving the point further behind her every moment.

"God bless her," growled the old mate, when a prolonged shriek from a Kanaka, who had climbed to the main yard to keep a look-out, made all hands start.

"The i-i-ice—the i-i-ce!"

Yes, there it was, tossing in huge columns and blocks ahead, to leeward, and even to windward of the ship.

The old mate raised the wheel.

"Luff, luff," screamed Camp; "you are steering straight for the biggest ice-hill of 'em all."

"I know what I'm about," growled Gibbs, peering keenly through the darkness.

The men exchanged glances, then looked at the mate as if they thought he had gone mad. The towering seas hurled the craft with the speed of a thunderbolt toward the floating rock of ice ahead.

"Come, down with that wheel," shouted Camp, angrily. "I'm master of this craft."

He seized the spokes of the helm, when the old mate quietly pointed over his shoulder off the weather bow.

"What? I see nothing but patches of foam."

"Ay, and solid patches they are, too. They're patches, or rather *lumps* of ice; mind that, my lad, and then put down the wheel if you like."

The young captain rushed forward, and swinging himself into the fore-shrouds, perceived that the old officer was right. There was a large floe a quarter of a point off the weather bow. Had the mate luffed, a stove ship would have been the result.

Between the floe and the great ice-hill ahead there was a clear passage; but it was so narrow that Gibbs had resolved to wait until he was near enough to the frozen rock to pass it, before he luffed.

This Camp now comprehended at a glance. He rushed aft just as the old sailor, putting down the helm, sent the ship gliding through the passage into clear water beyond the berg.

The mate now surrendered the wheel to one of the men, when the skipper, grasping his rough hand, apologized for the way he had spoken to him.

"It don't matter," replied Gibbs, smiling. "You are young and inexperienced. I'd have made the same mistake at your age."

The gale was still blowing furiously. The decks of the craft were frequently half buried in the sea as she rolled to leeward. The Kanaka look-out, astraddle of the main yard, felt his legs submerged every time the vessel keeled over, clinging to ropes and rigging, the crew on deck, inured to hunger and hardship, laughed, chatted and cracked their jokes, while shivering in their drenched garments. Suddenly they paused; a splashing, gurgling noise, like that made by a drowning man, was distinctly audible beneath the deck. The bright eyeballs of the Malays rolled; the Portuguese looked gloomy, and crossed themselves.

"Men," said Camp, after holding a brief consultation with his mate, "there's no mistaking that noise; we are stoven. You all heard the scraping and thumping as we rounded the point. I thought then that it would be strange if the rocks didn't knock a hole in our timbers. I'm sorry I didn't take Gibbs' advice about leaving this sea several weeks ago. You've stood by me like true men without grumbling, and I thank you. But it makes me very heavy-hearted to think I've got you into this scrape."

"You thought it was all for the best." "You've used us well, captain." "We'll stand by you yet," and similar exclamations now broke from the crew on all sides, for they loved their young skipper, who had treated them like brothers.

"Rig the pumps," ordered Gibbs. "Let us keep afloat as long as we can."

"Ay, ay, lads; to work! to work!" exclaimed Camp; and the dull clang of the pump-handle was heard.

The yards were now braced round, and the vessel was headed for the coast. As she boomed upon her way, some of the crew were stationed near the boats to be ready for lowering. The hold of the doomed craft was filling rapidly; she buried bows, windlass and try-works at every plunge while the seas, breaking over her water-clogged hull, threatened every moment to force her down. The men, in obedience to orders, had abandoned the pumps, and were engaged in stowing sea-biscuits, salt meat, fresh water and other

provisions into the boats. Their preparations were soon completed, and just as the water, with a loud roar, burst through the hatches between decks, the captain sprung to the wheel, and, luffing up, gave the order to lower away. The four boats dropped into the water, and the men sprung into them. Camp and his mate were about to follow, when a tremendous sea struck the ship, and she rolled suddenly to leeward with a force that snapped the tackle-falls of the boat in twain, and caused them (the boats) to drift clear of her. Unprepared for the pitch of the craft, the old mate, who had been holding on to one of the mizzen-chains, fell headlong into the sea. The wave, as it receded, lifted him upon its crest, and bore him toward the foremost boat, by the crew of which he was soon picked up.

Now glancing toward the ship, as she rolled on through the darkness to leeward, the anxious crews saw, for an instant, the tall figure of Camp, who stood upon the round-house waving his cap to them. They made every effort to reach the doomed vessel, as she dashed on, booming shoreward with terrific velocity; but they were unable to overtake her; she soon vanished from their sight.

"Poor Camp; we've seen the last of him, I'm afraid," said the mate, mournfully. "It'll be a sad blow to the old folks at home. He has a mother and father living. Steward," he added, turning toward the forward part of the boat, "give me the night-glass I told you to bring with you."

"He isn't with us," said the bow oarsman. "P'r'aps he's in one of the other boats."

Accordingly, the other crews were questioned; they could give no information, however, regarding the steward. No person had seen him when the boats were lowered; so all hands came to the conclusion that he had been washed overboard by one of the seas that previously struck the ship.

"That makes the third man we've lost to-night," said Gibbs, gloomily. "In order that we may not lose more, let us keep together, so as to be ready to help one another, in case—"

He paused, and his men sprung to their feet, as a dull crash, followed by a faint cry of agony, was suddenly borne to their ears through the din of the storm.

The head of the old mate dropped upon his breast.

"The crash was the ship striking upon the rocks," he groaned, "and the voice was Camp's! The poor boy is lost with his craft. God have mercy on his soul!"

Animated by a faint hope, however, he ordered the steersmen of the boats to continue on their course. But they had not proceeded far when they found themselves surrounded by floating fragments of ice. Working their boats hither and thither, they were carried many miles from their original course, and finally succeeded in landing upon a sandy beach.

At daylight, the old mate, with several of his men, mounted to the summit of a lofty cliff, hoping to discover some vestige of the wreck. No sign of the *Norwich* was in sight, however; and though, during the whole of that day, the men searched along the coast, not a plank or piece of rope belonging to the vessel could be discovered.

For two days the old mate continued the search without success. On the fourth, the gale having subsided all hands quitted the coast in their boats, steering north.

A week later, they were picked up by the whaler *Wester*, bound to the Sandwich Islands.

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD LUCK.

THE parents of the unfortunate captain of the *Norwich* lived in a humble little stone house, situated on a rising bit of ground, overlooking the bright-blue waters of New Bedford Harbor. Samuel Camp was a retired sea-captain, nearly sixty years of age; his wife, Martha, was a few years his junior. Being sober and industrious, the old man had, during a sea-life of forty years, accumulated quite a fortune, nearly the whole of which, about ten years previous to the time under consideration, he had lost, by the breaking of the bank in which he had deposited it. Since then, he had lived in the little house mentioned, with his wife, an adopted daughter, and his son Thomas, until the latter—who was a bold, energetic

youth, and who had had some experience at sea as captain of a coasting schooner—obtained command of the ill-fated *Norwich*.

It was a stormy winter's night, about five months after the loss of the vessel. A bright wood-fire blazed upon the old-fashioned hearth of the stone house, playing strange antics with the shadows of the old couple reflected upon the wall. Mrs. Camp was knitting; her husband sat opposite to her, reading a book. There was nothing peculiar in the old lady's appearance, except a certain *infantile* expression which, in spite of her wrinkles, her spectacles and high-frilled cap, pervaded her whole countenance.

Mr. Camp was a broad-shouldered man, with a round head, a wide face, and a protuberance of the right cheek, caused by a constant use of the "weed."

Between the old people, seated by a little table, was a young girl of seventeen—the adopted daughter—industriously occupied with her needle. She was quite pretty, with brown hair, large, blue eyes and a shapely figure, neatly clad. Now and then she would steal a glance, full of tender sympathy, toward the bowed face of the old lady.

The gale shrieked and howled without, the window-panes rattled, the old house shook; strange noises came with the gusts of wind that were whirled down the chimney.

"What *can* have become of him? My boy! my poor boy!" cried Mrs. Camp, suddenly throwing down her knitting, while the tears rolled from under her spectacles.

"We'll hear from him soon, depend upon it!" said the young girl, as she pressed both hands of the old lady in her own. "Yes," she added, hopefully, "I feel as if we shall."

"Ay, ay, Alice; so do I," said Mr. Camp, flourishing his pipe. "You do very wrong, Martha, to go on in this way. Let me see," he added, "his craft must have reached the Sandwich Islands in October, and it's now February. He must be well on his way home!"

"If I could only *think* so," said Mrs. Camp; "but I feel as if something is wrong."

The old man laughed.

"So you used to feel when I was off," said he, "but I always turned up safe and sound in spite of it."

The old lady's spirits revived.

The cheerful tones of her husband, with the kind, blue eyes of Alice, and the pressure of her little white hands, were very powerful to soothe.

The next morning Mrs. Camp rose early. Entering the room which her son occupied when at home, she threw open the window to admit the air and the sunlight, dusted the furniture, the books, and rearranged several little ornaments upon the mantel, as she had done every morning for the last two years. She would allow no other person to perform this work; *her* hand alone must prepare the room for the son whom she expected home; no person understood his tastes and habits as well as she.

Having arranged every thing to her satisfaction, she dressed herself for going out.

"It's too cold for you, this morning, mamma," was spoken in a soft voice behind her. "Why not let *me* go?"

She shook her head.

"I must be the first to hear news of my boy, if there's any to be had," she said.

And she quitted the house.

A quarter of an hour's walk carried her to the office of Mr. N——, the ship-owner. The clerk looked up with a familiar smile as he gave her a chair. He was used to seeing her by this time; she had called at the office every morning for the last three months.

"Any news yet?" she faltered.

"No, ma'am."

Her heart sunk; she forgot to warm her half-benumbed fingers by the red-hot stove; she turned and tottered out of doors.

As she hurried on toward the stone house, a stout man, wearing the garb of a fisherman, emerged from behind a tree and followed her slowly.

After she had entered the building, he advanced and knocked at the door, which was opened by Alice.

"Oh! is it you, Thad? Come in!" she said; and taking off his hat, Thad entered the room, blushing like a schoolboy beneath the quiet glance of the young girl's blue eyes.

Mrs. Camp looked up, and the fisherman turned pale. He

took the arm of the old man, and led him into an adjoining room.

"My boy!" he gasped. "You have news of the lad?"

"Well, ye-ye-yes!" stammered Thad.

"Out with it!" cried old Samuel, a flash of joy sweeping across his face, "The lad is come; he's—"

"No," interrupted Thad, sorrowfully; and then, in a few words, he gave an account of the loss of the *Norwich*, as it had been described to him that very morning by one of the men—a Portuguese—who had been saved, and who had just arrived in New Bedford.

The old captain threw on his overcoat when his visitor had concluded, and, without saying a word to his wife, accompanied him to the boarding-house where the Portuguese was to be found.

He questioned the man closely; but the answers he received were such as extinguished the faint hopes he had indulged that his son might still be alive. A whaler, the *Commerce*, from the Kamtchatka Sea, had, a few days after the disaster, discovered, in the ice, a dead body, which, from the description, the Portuguese thought must have been that of the unfortunate captain.

With heavy heart and crushed spirit, the old man returned to the house. Gradually, and as silently as he could, he broke the sad news to his wife.

It almost killed her. For eight days she lay in a delirium, raving about her son. When she recovered from it, she was for a time too weak to leave her couch. It was not probable that she would ever have done so, but for the unremitting and loving attentions of Alice. The young girl now had reason to believe that the mind of the invalid wandered. She would speak of her son's coming home in the old familiar way, just as if nothing had happened. When able to leave her bed, she would visit his room every morning, dusting the books, the furniture, and arranging his "best clothes," kept in a trunk in a corner, as carefully as before she heard the sad news. She would also insist, no matter how cold or stormy the weather might be, on visiting the ship-owner every day.

She remained in this state of mind for about three months, when, one morning, she suddenly confronted her husband, and

putting both hands upon his shoulder, looked him steadily in the face.

"Samuel," she said in a solemn voice, "our son still lives!"

"Poor Martha," cried the old man, stroking her hair; "poor woman!"

"You think my mind is affected," she murmured, sadly; "but you are mistaken. He lives. I feel it *here*!"

And she laid her hand on her heart.

"He is far from us," she went on, "living somewhere on that dreary northern coast. Yes, the ship struck the rocks; but he—he was a good swimmer and contrived to get to the shore. Samuel," she added, firmly, "we must go to him. My God! the idea of our allowing him to stay there to perish!"

"Little use of searching for the dead," said the old man, sorrowfully. "You forget that his body was found in the ice and buried ashore."

"*His* body in the ice?—*his* beautiful body? No!" she cried, wildly; "it was not his; it was not my poor boy's; it was somebody's that looked like his. They made a mistake. I combed his beautiful brown hair before he went away," she added, plaintively, "and it won't freeze; it was never made to freeze in the ice."

"Alas—"

"We *must* go," she interrupted. "You understand the sea. You shall get a vessel, and we will both go in search of our boy; for I tell you he *lives*!"

"Of course, if I thought he did!" cried the old man, his face lighting up with a flash of joy, "if I thought—but no, it seems impossible, impossible!"

Nevertheless, the old lady was not to be turned from her purpose. Samuel consulted his friend Thad, the fisherman, who thought it could do "no harm to go."

"If you don't," he added, "I feel quite certain the old lady will go raving mad. It's the only thing to save her."

Alice thought so, too; so, one morning, Samuel surprised Mr. N——, the ship-owner, by presenting himself, with a request for a vessel.

On learning the old man's reasons for wishing to try the

sea again, Mr. N——— shook his head, and said he thought the search would be a useless one. There was hardly a doubt that the young captain was lost.

"However, if you are really bent on going to sea again, Camp," he added, "I know of no man whom I should prefer to yourself to command one of my vessels. But it seems to me that at your time of life——"

"Time has been kind to me, sir," interrupted the old man, throwing his arms about his head to show his activity. "Rheumatism in my left leg is my only complaint, and I haven't felt that very much of late. I should have gone to sea when I lost my money," he added, "if Martha hadn't objected.

"Let me see," mused the ship-owner. "There are but few of my vessels in port, at present, and they are all being repaired. There's none that'll be fit for sea within the next three months, except the *Tarquina*. There you are, Camp, the *Tarquina*."

The old man shrugged his shoulders, and seemed to reflect. The *Tarquina* had the name of being an unlucky ship. One captain had gone mad aboard of her and drowned himself; another had been killed by a sperm whale; a third had been shot by his own mate; and, during her last voyage, the vessel had been twice run into and seriously damaged. Sailors always remember, and are superstitiously influenced by such casualties; so Camp feared he would be unable to procure a crew for the ship.

Mr. N——— guessed his thoughts.

"As to a crew," said he, "I will engage to find you in men enough for your craft, such as they are. There's a 'pile' of 'em boarding with Mrs. ——, in —— street. Of course, they are green; you can't expect *seamen*; they always stick to the *lucky* vessels, although in *your* hands a craft can't very well help being a lucky one. Lower for whales as often as you can, Camp, after you have searched for your son; it will not detain you much, and, on account of your misfortunes, I'll give you an excellent 'lay.' So there you are—the *Tarquina*, unless you choose to wait several months."

No, he could not afford to wait; he would take the *Tarquina*, as there was no other craft to be had. So he left the office, and hurrying home, informed his wife of his success.

She was overjoyed, and entering her son's room, she at once went to work packing his clothes and other property into a large trunk. The old captain informed her that there was no hurry—that the vessel could not possibly be got ready for sea in less time than a fortnight.

"So long!" cried Martha, plaintively; and she bowed her face on her hands.

"The time will pass quickly, after all, mamma!" said Alice soothingly, "we have so much to do, before we can start."

"We?" cried the captain; "ice? Who told you that *you* were to go with us, my little bird?"

"Indeed I am," she replied; "you won't think of leaving *me* behind?"

"It is better that you should stay," said Martha. "Samuel and I have talked it over; you are to board with Mr. Hall, the minister; you and your friend Mary can then be together as much as you like."

Mary Hall and Alice were much attached to each other; they had been acquainted from childhood. The minister's pretty cottage, half buried in flowers and vines, and graced with the presence of her friend, seemed to Alice like a paradise on earth.

Old Martha, who knew this, could not, therefore, help noticing the serious expression which, instead of the happy, beaming look she had expected to see, now clouded the face of the young girl.

Without saying a word, however, the latter busied herself with her household duties; and Mrs. Camp's mind, as usual, was soon wholly occupied with thoughts of her lost boy.

Camp was now gone to look at the Tarquina. He had found her alongside the wharf. Her quarter bulwarks and her topmasts were in a sad plight. Having lately performed a long voyage, her lower timbers were covered with barnacles, even above her water-line. Frequent contact with the ice in the Arctic Ocean and Kamtehatka Sea, had stoven her bows, and also that part of the keel beneath the fore and mizzen chains. She was certainly a clumsy-looking craft, and Camp made a "wry face" as he scrutinized her.

There was a small skiff alongside the dock; he jumped into it and sculled it around the old craft, examining every crack,

crevice and dent in her timbers. The ship carpenters and riggers, occupied in repairing the vessel, looked down at him curiously; but he heeded them not. Seizing the man-ropes dangling from the gangway, he boarded the vessel, and peered into the fore-castle, the cook's galley and the cabin, neither of which looked very comfortable. They were quite small, and painted, inside and out, a dingy, melancholy green.

The deck, to the surprise of the old captain, who had never before seen a *painted* deck, was also of this color, as were the bulwarks, the yards, and even the three masts as high as the tops. But when, on going to the wheel, Camp discovered that the spokes, the barrel, the compass and the binnacle partook of the same hue, he paused suddenly and thrust nearly the half of a plug of tobacco into his mouth. "Ay, ay," he exclaimed, bringing his fist down upon the binnacle with great force; "a *green* ship—blast her—every thing *green*, and I'm to have a *green* crew!"

He shook his head sadly and left the craft. When upon the dock, he stood for some time surveying, with a mournful glance, the old hull, straight up and down masts, and awry yards.

"It won't do!" he exclaimed, turning suddenly. "I can't get my heart into that craft, as I've always done before into them I was going to v'yage. Somehow, she don't seem to warm to me nor I to her. Them crooked yards look as if they'd rather not shake hands."

And he moved sadly away.

A few days after, he learned that his men were obtained; but that no officer could be found who was willing to sail in the craft.

The old captain now visited all the sailor boarding-houses in the city, and although he offered to share the profits of his own "lay" (payment in oil) with competent officers if they would ship in his vessel, he could not find one who was willing to go with him. Day after day, he continued his search in vain; a month passed in this manner; his ship only needed officers to put to sea at once.

His friend Thad Blake, the fisherman, who had performed several voyages in whalers during his early years, had consented to accept the position of first mate in the *Tarquana*; but the

captain yet needed his second and third mates, and good harpooners.

"There's one way," said Thad, "and it's the *only* way; which is, to alter the name of the ship. By going to New London, I think I can then get what we want."

The captain, wondering that he had not thought of this before, consented. The owner being applied to said it was an excellent idea, and suggested "Luck" for the new name.

Accordingly, the old characters were obliterated, and the new letters painted over them in black.

One evening, a week later, Thad returned from New London with two good mates and four boat-steerers. The second mate was a tall, long-limbed, sinewy fellow—Tom Squid, by name—with a face as dark as a Hottentot's, and keen eyes of a pale blue. The third officer, Mr. Clip, was short, stout and compact, with face and eyes like a small, yellow bag-pudding, containing two blackberries. The boat-steerers, long-armed, powerful young fellows—one a Gayheader, another a Portuguese, and the others white men—looked as if they knew how to handle a harpoon in the proper manner.

All, on their arrival, were at once sent to the Luck, which was now anchored in the stream, with the foremast hands on board. At daylight the next day, the captain, with his wife, was pulled alongside in a shore-boat. The old lady was hoisted on board in a chair; but, although the weather was wet and squally, she would not go into the cabin until the trunk containing her son's "things" had been carefully stowed in her apartment.

The aged couple had parted with Alice on the wharf. They had supposed that she would proceed at once to Mr. Hall's, where they left her, her trunk being packed and ready. Judge of their surprise, therefore, when Blake entered the cabin to inform them that "Miss Alice and trunk" were coming aboard. In fact, by the time they gained the deck, the young girl was being assisted up the gangway.

Before Mrs. Camp could speak a word, she threw herself into the old lady's arms:

"Forgive me, mamma—forgive me for disobeying you," she exclaimed. "I couldn't bear to part with you, you need me so much!"

"But, my dear girl, you must not go with us; I can not consent to that. The hardships of a sea-life—"

"I can bear them," interrupted Alice. "Surely *I* ought to bear them if *you* are willing to."

"But your friend Mary will be much disappointed."

"Mary is a good girl. She knew I intended to go with you from the first; I made her my confidant. You won't send me back, will you?" she asked, coaxingly. "I ~~know~~ *you* won't."

"I am afraid I will have to. It would be very selfish in me to wish to keep you confined with me during a whole voyage in a whaleship."

"You speak as if it would be a hardship for me to stay with you!" cried Alice, "when there's nothing in the world could give me greater pleasure. It will be so nice to make your tea for you, to help you sew, and to cheer you up when you happen to feel a little unwell."

"Ay, ay, you shall go with us, my bird," said Camp, "that you shall, if you want to; so, down you go, both of you, into the cabin, while we are getting up the anchor and setting top-sails."

Alice threw her arms around the captain's neck and kissed him. Then she took the old lady's arm, and helped her into the cabin.

"God bless you, darling," said Mrs. Camp, when they were in the state-room; "you are very kind, and when we find ~~Alma~~ —my son—"

She did not finish the sentence; but an arch glance shooting through her spectacles expressed what was not uttered.

Alice colored and turned aside her head, a sad smile wreathing her lip. She had never felt for the young captain an affection deeper than that of a sister for a brother; but she had resolved not to refuse to marry him if the old couple, who had been very kind to her, should really wish her to do so. She might learn to love him in time.

CHAPTER III.

TROUBLES.

THE anchors were soon lifted, the topsails sheeted and hoisted, the wheel manned; then, catching the breeze upon her starboard quarter, the old craft plunged her clumsy bows with a sullen "thug" into the waves, and rolled on her seaward course. The sky was covered with leaden-colored clouds; a drizzling rain was falling; the wind was cold and fresh, and the spray, leaping over the weather-rail, swept the decks fore and aft.

As soon as the anchors were lashed in their places, the cable stowed, the decks washed down, the rigging coiled, and standing sails rigged, Camp mustered his crew aft. They were ranged in a line on the lee side of the quarter-deck, when the old skipper surveyed them with a critical glance. There were a few big, strapping fellows among them; but all bore the unmistakable air of "greenys." Camp dismissed them, after the larboard and starboard watches had been selected, and sent his officers to instruct them as to the names of the "ropes," and to show them how to furl, reef and steer.

In the course of a week they had several opportunities of taking in sail, when they conducted themselves in a creditable manner. Each of them had, by this time, also practiced at the wheel, and could steer tolerably well "on the wind." Camp, who was now confined the greater part of the time to his cabin with rheumatism, was glad to hear the favorable reports of his officers regarding the crew, who, he was informed, were not eager to learn, and cheerfully performed their duties.

"Feed 'em well," the old man would say, rubbing his hands gleefully; "feed 'em well, and they'll do what's right. There's nothing like a good allowance to make men cheerful and willing."

One day, however, the man at the wheel heard the steward say to a boat-steerer that "there would be little lowering for whales from the old Luck, as the captain was going in search

of a lost son in the Northern Sea, and thought more of finding him than he did of getting whales."

When the man was relieved, he reported to his shipmate what he had heard, and, from that moment, the officers noticed a change in the behavior of the crew. They did not jump to obey orders with their former alacrity, and when pulling upon a rope neither shouted nor sang. Every time the old captain now came up from below, he would encounter sullen glances directed toward him. Sitting on the deck sunning his rheumatic leg, he would rub the limb thoughtfully, vainly puzzling his brain to account for the strange behavior of his crew.

"Doctor" (the cook), said he, one morning, limping to the galley, "do you give the lads enough to eat?"

"Ay, ay, sir; same as ever."

"And do you cook the meat well?"

"Yes, sir; same as for de cabin."

Then the captain questioned his officers and his harpooners, but not one of them could give him a satisfactory answer. He resolved to wait awhile before addressing himself directly to the crew.

As he moved toward the quarter-deck, the cry of "There blows! there blows!" was shouted from the knightheads by a big, strapping fellow named Tom Henderson—one of the green hands.

The skipper seized his glass, hobbled to the rail, directed a momentary glance at the "spouts," then turned, and quietly sitting upon the half-shadowed deck, thrust his legs into a broad strip of sunlight.

A low murmur of disapprobation was borne to his ears from forward. The next moment, headed by Tom Henderson, the whole watch came aft, pausing within a few feet of the skipper.

"Well, men, what is it?" he quietly asked. "The cook tells me you get enough to eat."

"That isn't what we came here for," said Henderson, roughly. "You know very well—"

Before he could conclude, the first officer sprung upon him, seized him by the collar, and, with a sudden, vigorous push, sent him sliding over to the lee side of the deck.

"You miserable lubber!" cried Thad, "didn't I tell you,

to-day, that whenever you want to speak to the skipper, you must always go on the lee-side?"

"Men!" cried Henderson, fiercely, turning toward his followers, "you said you would stand by me! Now's the time I've been pushed, which is an *insult*; we didn't ship to be insulted. Come on, boys—come on!"

And picking up a handspike, he rushed toward the first mate.

The captain, leaning upon his crutches, confronted him, his eyes burning beneath his gray brows, like fiery circles.

"What's the matter with ye, my man? Just stand where ye are, will ye—you, Blake, keep back—and tell me what ye came aft for? I'll settle with the mate about pushing ye; he was a little too hasty, I'll own, and he shan't do it again unless he has more provocation. Now, then, out with your errand!"

Henderson glanced at his men. They stood motionless; not one of them seemed anxious to fight. The giant looked disappointed. He had hoped for an opportunity to distinguish himself.

"What I came aft for," he said, gruffly, "was to tell you, captain, that unless you lower for whales when you see 'em, we'll knock off duty, to a man. There's whales, now," he added, pointing in the direction of the spouts, "and the boats ought to be down after 'em."

Camp smiled grimly.

"Did ye hear the boat-steerers aloft sing out for 'em?" he inquired.

"No; but—"

"They were finbacks," interrupted the skipper, "that's the reason they were not sung out for or lowered for. Whalers don't often lower for finbacks, as you'll l'arn after awhile."

"That's only an excuse."

"D'ye tell me I *lie*? D'ye tell me I *lie*?" gritted the skipper, through his closed teeth.

And he seized his crutch, firmly.

"If you like to take it so—"

Rap! rap! rap! Three sound blows from the crutch made the head of the giant reel.

He rushed toward the old man like a mad bull; and as his

followers now began to pick up handspikes and crowbars, a desperate affray between them and the officers must have taken place, but for the interference of Alice, who stepped between the old skipper and the giant, just as the latter was about to strike.

"Go back, sir! go back!" she cried. "Surely you would not wish to hurt a man of his age. His rheumatism makes him a little irritable. I beg of you to try and forget the provocation you have received. Forward, men, forward!" she added, motioning to the rest. "For heaven's sake, don't let us have any quarreling in this vessel. You all seemed well satisfied at first; *do* try and feel the same way *now*."

"Well, the fact is, miss," said the giant, sullenly, "we shipped to make something, not to go in search of a dead body, which it seems the skipper intends to do. However, we'll go forward, for your sake; but if things ain't managed better about lowering for whales and all that, we'll have to knock off duty."

So saying, he moved slowly away, followed by his shipmates.

Although a girl's blue eyes and pleading voice could produce such an effect upon the men, the latter still remained sullen and discontented. Day after day the dark look was seen upon their faces; they performed their duties grumbling; and the officers often noticed, at night, a large group gathered forward of the windlass, conversing in low, earnest tones. Squid, fearing mutiny, would often glide stealthily alongside the try-works, and keeping his long, lank limbs in shadow, would play the eavesdropper; but the men spoke so low that he could never hear what was said.

The boat-steerers, in obedience to his private orders, frequently mixed with the men, endeavoring to cheer them with hopes of a successful voyage. They (the boat-steerers) persuaded all the foremast hands that the whales that had been seen were really "finbacks,"—a species that are seldom lowered for, as they never yield oil enough to pay for the trouble of capturing them.

"The skipper is one of the best that ever sailed out of New Bedford," added the harpooners; "he does not stint your allowance; he allows you to amuse yourselves as you choose;

he and his officers treat you well in every respect; what more do you want?"

The larboard watch being composed of good men, acknowledged this, and said *they* saw no reason to complain; they were perfectly satisfied; but the starboard, which was under the control of Tom Henderson, still grumbled. The giant could never forget the blows he had received from the old man; he should hate him, he said, as long as he lived.

Meanwhile the Luck, blundering along with fair winds finally arrived off the Western Islands, from which the skipper intended to procure a good stock of potatoes and onions. The islands were invested with a peculiar interest, in old Martha's estimation, from the fact that her son had written his first letter to her while his vessel was cruising off their shores. She tottered to the rail, and wistfully watched the land as the Luck boomed along toward it.

When within a league of the shore, the captain backed the main yard, and ordered his boat lowered and manned.

"May I go with you?" inquired Martha, eagerly. "Our boy, you know, must have landed on that shore, several times, when his ship was here."

The captain consented; so Martha was lowered into the boat. The old man, with his crutch, swung himself into it by means of a rope, and unhooked the after tackle with his own hands.

The boat's crew, among whom was Tom Henderson, did not pull a very good stroke; nevertheless, the light vessel struck the beach at last.

"Let no one leave the boat," said the skipper, as he hobbled off; "I shall be back in half an hour. I shall send some fruit and cheese, with other things, to be stowed away in the stern-sheets."

The old lady now stretched out her arms to be helped ashore. She breathed a sigh of satisfaction when her feet struck the beach; and adjusting her spectacles, she walked to and fro, studying the sand, and feeling very sorry that the water had washed away the footprints of her son.

"Are you looking for shells, ma'am?" inquired one of the men.

A large group of Portuguese, of both sexes, had collected

by this time, and were watching her with some curiosity. When the man spoke, she paused and looked up.

"No," she said, "but *he*, my son," and she glanced round her with a certain air of pride, as if she thought every person must feel interested in *him*—"my son was here, years ago; he trod this very beach!"

The large black eyes of the Portuguese damsels beamed with sympathy. Several of them came to her side and begged her to tell them all about her boy. She gladly complied; she had so much to say about *him*, that the time seemed to have slipped away very fast, when her husband presented himself before her, leaning wearily upon his crutch.

"Where are they?" he inquired.

"Who?"

"The men—the boat's crew—where have they gone to? I told 'em not to leave the boat."

She glanced round her, much bewildered.

"I did not know they were gone," she said.

The skipper groaned.

"They have deserted!" he said. "Ay, ay, I see through it, now: they have all deserted—seven men. God only knows where we can get more."

He seated himself on a rock, and bowed his head sorrowfully.

"Will it make any difference?" Martha inquired. "Can we not go on without 'em? Can we not look for our boy all the same?"

"No; we were short-handed enough before. The ship can't be worked right till we get seven men to supply the place of them we have lost."

"Perhaps they'll come back, after all," said the old lady.

Camp thought they might; so the old couple seated themselves in the boat and waited. When two hours had passed, however, the skipper felt confident he should never see his boat's crew aboard the *Luck* again.

Four Portuguese consented to pull him and his wife to his craft for a few reals; being good oarsmen, they were not long in reaching the ship.

Camp informed his mate of what had happened, and ordered him to run the vessel in shore and anchor.

"Ay, ay, and we'll soon have the scamps aboard again, if we hunt 'em up sharp," said Thad.

He was mistaken; the runaways were never found; and a whole week elapsed before the captain succeeded in shipping even one man from the island.

He needed six more; so, day after day, he was seen hobbling in search of them through the streets of the little town of Fyad. He would accost every Portuguese he met, and endeavor to persuade him to join the crew of his ship. In this way he at last shipped four men; but it seemed impossible to obtain more, although he still continued to ransack the town from one end to the other.

One day, weary and sick at heart, the old man seated himself upon the landing, and, stretching out his rheumatic leg, commenced to rub it, in the thoughtful manner usual to him when trouble weighed upon his mind.

While thus occupied, a shadow suddenly passed over the leg, and turning, Camp saw, moving toward the water, a figure which at once attracted his attention. It was a short, stout, but active-looking frame, very broad about the shoulders and thin about the flanks. The head was shaped like a lion's, and the hair, falling around it in gray, shaggy locks, was half-concealed by a red woolen cap. An old but clean Guernsey frock, a pair of flowing pants of blue cloth, together with a certain flexible, wave-like swaying of the body they enveloped, would have betrayed the sailor to Camp at once, even had he not noticed the very intricate and difficult "Turk's knot" which the man was weaving with an easy, experienced hand, while he walked.

"Ay, ay, there's an old chap worth his weight in gold," muttered the skipper, rising and hobbling toward the stranger. "If I can only get him in my craft—"

He paused as the stranger suddenly stepped, and fixing his eyes upon the "Luck," uttered a prolonged, significant whistle.

"Ay, ay," he exclaimed, "that's her; I'd know her out of a thousand; it's the *Tarquina*, or my name isn't Ben Rock."

Whirling himself half round as he spoke, he saw Camp.

"How d'ye do, mate?" cried he. "Isn't that craft the *Tarquina*?"

"No, it's the Luck."

"Luck! luck! Why, my eyes! d'ye think I'm *green*? There never was any *luck* about *that* craft! I sailed in her part of the last v'yage, and ought to know; it's the *Tarquina*, I tell ye!"

"It *was*, my man, but now it's the Luck; the name has been changed."

"Ay, ay, I understand!" cried Rock. "You're the skipper, this v'yage—ain't that so?"

Camp nodded.

"Well, I pity ye. You're a good man, I think, but I'm afraid you won't make much out of *that* old tub."

"I hope you're mistaken. I'm in want of two men. Will you ship? I'll give you a good lay."

Rock pulled a ball of three-stranded spun-yarn from his pocket. He then formed a hangman's noose, and slipping it around his neck, threw the other end to Camp.

"I'd rather you'd pull on that, captain," said he, "than ask me to ship in that craft."

"Nonsense, man, you are superstitious."

"Not a bit of it; but there's a fatality hangin' about that ship; there is, for sartin. She'll never have any luck. It isn't superstition, it's *rats*!" added Rock, thoughtfully, scratching his head.

"Rats?"

"Ay, ay; there never was a rat found in that craft, yet. They're cannin' creatur's, and know what's good for 'em."

"So you won't ship?"

"Certainly not, in that tub."

The old man turned away, mournfully.

"It seems as if we'll never get away from here," he muttered. "Martha, poor woman, will go crazy if—"

"See here, cap," interrupted Rock, "what's that about 'going crazy'?"

The skipper told his story in a few words, when Rock seized his hand in a hearty clasp.

"God bless ye!" he exclaimed, "you ought to have told me this before."

He pulled an empty bottle from his jacket pocket, tore a leaf from an old note-book, and requesting Camp to look

over his shoulder, to see that he spelt right, wrote, or rather, scratched, upon a paper what follows:

"Silvur mountid marlinespike
jack knife with lanyard

Seel wale's tooth Mrs Brite number — — — street has em
and shee must give em to my littel nefew only livin' relativ
Tom Rock to whom I dew herbie bequeathe em in proof of
wich here is mi hand and seel. BEN ROCK."

Twisting the paper into the form of a wisp, he thrust it
into the bottle, which he then corked and threw into the sea.

"What's that for?" inquired Camp, much surprised.

"It's my last will and 'testamentary,'" answered Rock,
solemnly. "I'm a-goin' to ship in your craft."

The skipper's face beamed with joy.

"You'll make a good v'yage," said he, rubbing his hands.
"I'll see that you have good pay, and I may promote you,
and—"

"It's no use, sir," interrupted Rock, shaking his head.
"That craft, I tell ye, never will have any luck. But I'm
ready to ship in her for the sake of the old woman; and I'll
get my chum Hal Trevor, to go with me. I'll bring him
here, if you'll wait. We've only been here two days, havin'
come in a Portuguese brig, but the lad's as anxious for blue
water again as a live eel that's a-going to be fried."

The skipper gladly consenting to wait, Rock left him. He
returned in the course of half an hour, with a manly-looking
young fellow, whose face, as brown as a husked cocoanut,
clear, intelligent eyes, and trim, active limbs, betokened fa-
miliarity with blue water and a ship's rigging.

Camp scrutinized him from head to foot with much satis-
faction.

"I reckon, sir, there's nothin' about him to find fault with,"
said Rock. "He's had his sea-legs on a long time. He's only
twenty-two, but he's traveled more'n most men of twice his
age. He's tramped it through Brazil and had skirmishes
with tigers, Indians, and sich crentar's; he's been to South
Am'icky, from one end to t'other, and—"

"That'll do, Rock," interrupted Hal, laughing, "'ts not likely
the captain cares to wait for the end of your yarn. We are
ready to go aboard at once," he added, turning to Camp.
"We have brought all our toggery with us, in this"—pointing

to a large canvas-bag which the two men carried between them.

"Have you heard," inquired Camp, "have you heard the stories about my craft?"

"Ay, ay, an unlucky ship—so Ireck and the rest of 'em say; but I'm willing to risk a voyage in her, for all that."

"Hal and I, d'ye see," put in Rock, gravely, "has agreed that we'll 'go down' together."

"Nonsense!" cried the young sailor, "there'll be no going down in the matter. The Luck, under Captain Camp, will make a good voyage."

The old skipper looked pleased, and at once led the way to his boat, lying alongside of the landing. The boat was soon at the Luck's gangway, and its occupants on board.

"What do you think of 'em?" inquired the captain of Squid, who was the officer of the watch.

"Ship-shape. They are to go in my boat, of course."

"Not a bit of it, they belong to mine, both of 'em."

He moved to the weather-rail where stood his wife, gazing shoreward, as she had done at intervals, ever since the vessel anchored. She was overjoyed to hear of his success, and said that she felt quite sure that they would find their son, before many months had passed.

"I don't know about *that*," he replied, shaking his head ominously.

And with a troubled countenance, he limped into the cabin.

Hal Trevor now leaned carelessly over the forward rail; his chum was in the fore-castle. The old sailor had selected for himself and friend a good bunk, and was making it comfortable. Having brushed it carefully, he procured some wood and some nails with which he fixed a shelf and paper-rack on one side; also a stand upon which a lamp or candle might be placed; he also prepared a curtain.

The green hands, watching his operations with much interest, presently saw him pull from his pocket a piece of ivory carved to resemble a whale, except that a stem or little stump projected from between the flukes. By this part, Rock now held the image between his teeth and proceeded to cut some tobacco. Soon after he opened the top of the whale's head, by pressing on a spring, disclosing a hollow into which he

thrust the powdered tobacco. Lighting it he was soon enjoying his curious pipe, the smoke of which, when the cover of the instrument was shut, ascended through two small holes in such a way as to resemble the spout of a sperm whale.

"How much you take for him?" inquired one of the Portuguese.

"It ain't for sale," answered Rock. "It's a present from an old chum of mine who knowed better how to strike whales than to carve 'em. This was made for a sperm out of a whale's tooth but it looks more like a finback."

Orders to get up anchor were now heard on deck, and all hands were soon in their places. The brakes clanged merrily, keeping time to a rule sea-song shouted by old Rock, and the anchor was soon clear.

A few minutes later, the ship was staggering seaward before a spanking breeze under every thing she could carry. The rust was washed from the decks, the anchor lashed, and every thing made ship-shape before sundown, when the watches and boats' crews were selected.

The breeze was light, so light that the Luck, a slow craft by noon of the following day still sighted the land off the weather beam. It was half shrouded by a dark mist which was earnestly watched by Rock, who, with his friend Hal, was aloft at the fore.

"There's a storm a brewing, the old sailor at length remarked, "that fog isn't for nothing; neither is that yellow cloud which you can see, lad, by taking a squint to the north'ard."

His companion did not answer, and glancing toward him the other discovered the reason.

The glances of the young sailor were turned toward Alice, who stood by the side of the old lady near the weather quarter rail.

Suddenly, he looked up to encounter the eyes of his chum, lighted beneath their shaggy brows with an expression of grim reggary. One of the old man's great horny fingers rested against the side of his nose; his left eye was half shut.

"It's the first time, Hal, I've ever knowed you to neglect your duty," said he. "You were sent aloft to look out for whales, my lad, and not to be a-casting sheep's eyes at a little

lass on the quarter-deck. To change the subject, how's'ever," he added, before Hal could reply, "there'll be a squall pouncing upon us shortly."

And he pointed toward the yellow cloud which was now flying to pieces like a sail torn by the wind.

"I think you are right," answered the young sailor, "but it won't trouble us for half an hour, yet."

"I'm not so sartin of that. Hallow, what's this for?"

The operation was called forth by the appearance of a derrick with a block which he proceeded to secure to the mast, just beneath the cross-trees.

"The old lady wants to get a last look at the island, before it's left out of sight," was the reply. "She's to be hoisted up here in the lower half of a cask, with the young one; the old one's eyes are so weak that she can't see the land from the deck. The young one wanted to go with her, so the captain consented."

Rock showed the man how to fasten the block securely, and scrutinized the rope before it was rove, to make sure that it was strong enough to bear the intended weight. Soon the preparations were completed, and the wooden vessel began to ascend as the men pulled upon one of the parts of the rope. The old lady looked a little bewildered as she felt herself going up, but the cheerful face of her young companion and her kind words soothed her, so that when she arrived as high as the top-gallant cross-trees, upon which the two friends were stationed, she seemed quite composed.

"There mamma!—there it is!" cried Alice, pointing out the land to her, "do you see it?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Camp. "Still in sight—the land where my boy was; my noble boy!"

"Buz-z-z! buz-z-z! buz-z-z!"

"Hark! mamma; what strange noise is that?"

"It's the squall, miss!" said old Rock. "It'll be upon us directly."

And he pointed to windward where the water was tossed into clouds of flying spray.

"We had better go down, then!" cried Alice. "Will you be kind enough to tell them to lower us again?" she added.

He smiled.

"They are a-lowering you, already."

In fact, the "half-cask" had begun to descend without her perceiving it.

Whish-sh-sh! Hoo-oo! hoo-oo!

Howling, whizzing and luzzing, the squall was rapidly approaching; orders to take in sail rang through the ship.

Two men remained forward to lower the women to the deck; the rest, having clewed down the topmasts, hauled in the studding-sails etc., etc., darted aloft and out on the booms to reef and furl.

Suddenly, a kink in the rope attached to the vessel occupied by Mrs. Camp and Alice, caught in the block so that the men were unable to lower.

The old lady looked alarmed and bewildered; Alice trembled, but endeavored to seem calm. There they hung, suspended outward from the fore-topmast, between the yard and the top, with the rush and the rack of the squall bearing down toward them.

Rock and his chum, aloft, endeavored to clear the rope, but the kink was so firmly jammed in the block that they could make no impression upon it. While they were endeavoring to do so, the rigging of the old craft began to hum; her timbers creaked, a black shadow fell upon her decks as a dark haze passed over the sun; she trembled from stem to stern.

Suddenly, rushing, whizzing, booming and shrieking, the squall struck the ship, knocking her over on her beam-ends, and driving her through the water like a thunderbolt. The top-sails by this time were close-reefed and the lighter sails furled; nevertheless, the masts cracked and snapped ominously, the bows were buried at every plunge. The forms of the two women, still swaying aloft in their conveyance, could scarcely be distinguished amidst the rack, the mist, the spray, the long lines of driving rain. The green hands from the topsail yards stood in the top, staring open-mouthed at the females, but not knowing how to afford them assistance, until Captain Camp arrived with a long boat-hook, ordering them, (the green hands) to stand by to help him haul in the wooden vessel when the man stationed near the main-mast should let go the guy.

Before this could be done, however, the old craft gave a sudden furious plunge, a snapping noise was heard, and the guy parted, causing the half-cask to swing far out to leeward, where it remained, dangling over the hissing, boiling cauldron of water beneath. The situation of the two females was certainly a perilous one. The rope that held their swinging vessel was too far from the ship to be rescued by a boat-hook, or any other instrument of the kind, and it had slipped the length of a few feet through the holes in the cask so that the latter hung to one side in such a way as made it difficult for its occupants to keep their position; in fact, with every plunge of the ship, they were almost thrown into the sea.

In the midst of such peril, Alice seemed to think less of herself than of her aged companion. She kept one arm around the waist of Mrs. Camp, while holding to the rope with her disengaged hand, and encouraged the old lady with hopes of their being soon rescued.

All around them flew the spray like drifting flakes of snow; the rain beat upon them, the wind rolled and howled in their ears, the cask swung like a pendulum.

"Clear away the starboard boat; quick, men, for God's sake," shrieked Camp. "They can't hold out much longer—they'll drop into the sea in a minute."

In fact, both the old lady and Alice felt their fingers growing numb from their protracted hold of the rope, and their white faces were now turned imploringly toward the anxious spectators on board.

The boat was lowered; but a sea struck it and dashed it to pieces against the ship's side, before the men could jump into it.

"There's an end to our lowering," growled Camp, turning to his first and second mates. "For heaven's sake, Tack, Squid—any of ye; can't ye think of any way to save the two women?"

Squid seized a coil of ratline stuff and darted into the rigging.

"What are you going to do?" inquired Camp.

"To fasten a guy to the rope by a slip-knot, so that we can haul in the cask."

"Nonsense! Don't ye see that the minute we should pull

upon the guy the cask would turn over and spill the poor things into the sea?"

"You're right," said Squid, jumping back to the deck, "ay, ay, you're right. The sight of those poor creatures dangling over the yawning waters has made a ladder of me. God help 'em! What *can* we do for 'em, Captain Camp?"

"Mamma and I can't hold on but a few seconds longer. Save us! Save us! O! save mamma!" cried Alice imploringly.

"Poor child!" groaned the skipper. "God only knows how it can be done. Clear away the larboard boat and stand by to lower," he added. "We'll try *that* again."

"No use," said Thed; "it 'ill only be knocked to pieces as t'other was. However, we can try."

And he sprung toward the boat.

Before he could touch the falls, however, a singular cry broke from his shipmates behind him. Turning, he followed the direction of their glances, which were raised aloft toward the active form of the young sailor, Hal Trevor, who was now rapidly descending the halliards attached to the cask. A coil of rope which he had obtained from the top was thrown over his left shoulder; his friend, Rock, astride of the topsail yard, held one end.

"It's no use," muttered Thed, shaking his head, "that poor fellow can do nothing. He thinks he can right the cask so that we can haul it in, but he's mistaken: the rain has swollen the rope so that it can't slip back through the holes."

The young sailor was now on the cask. Perceiving that he was unable to balance it squarely as he had hoped to do, he fastened the rope he carried around the shoulders of Alice and the old lady. Rock descended quickly to the deck, and a part of the rope was soon in the hands of his shipmates, who stood prepared to haul, the moment the two females should let go their hold in obedience to the directions of the young seaman.

"For God's sake, haul quickly when they drop," shouted Hal. "Fear nothing," he added, turning toward Alice. "I've fastened the rope securely; there's plenty of men to pull you in; you'll be aboard before you know it."

He had taken several turns of the rope around his waist;

so when the two women finally dropped into the sea, he was between them to keep their heads above water while they were being hauled aboard.

Rock, with Squid, Clip, and Blake, stood waist deep in the boiling waters, lashed to the main-chains; with powerful arms stretching quickly outward they soon lifted the forms of the women from the frothing sea and pressed them to their respective berths, who soon helped them over the rail. Hal was, of course, the last on board.

Old Martha fainted in her husband's arms the moment she gained the deck; he conveyed her below, and Alice followed to attend her.

A little camphor soon restored her to her senses, and leaving her to the care of Alice, the skipper then returned to the deck.

He pressed both hands of the young sailor in his own. "You have saved my wife and child! God bless ye!" he exclaimed.

And he turned away unable to pronounce another word.

A few hours after, however, when the squall had passed, and the ship was gliding along under whole topsails, he called the young man into his cabin and informed him that he was to act hereafter as fourth-mate of the ship.

Afterwards, Alice and Mrs. Camp came forward to thank him for saving their lives. As he clasped the proffered hand of each, he perceived that the girl's trembled as if greatly agitated.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOMEWARD-BOUND SHIP.

In the course of a few months the *Luck* arrived on the cruising-ground off the Rio de La Plata. As yet, not a whale worth lowering for had been sighted, and Camp saw the old discontented look settling upon the faces of some of the men. In fact, Ben Rock now was the only man forward who performed his duty without grumbling. As mentioned, he had

predicted that the old craft would never meet with good luck ; but he had made his " will " and was, therefore, cheerful and resigned—prepared for the worst that might happen. His chum, Trevor—now fourth-mate—was one of those reckless good-natured young fellows, who, while they seldom devote a thought to the future, take the good or bad fortune of the present with an easy off-hand carelessness, that leaves them free to move on steadily in the path they have chosen.

Whales or no whales, it mattered not to Hal. With the blue scroll of sea-water rolled out before him, the broad, free skies above his head, the winds howling or singing—in storm or sunshine—he worked aloft or aloft with buoyant spirits, humming the wild tunes he had learned during his wanderings.

And now, wherever he might chance to be, whether asleep in his bunk, whether walking the deck in the night-watch, whether swaying far aloft on the royal-yard, or moving far down among the black caverns of the hold, the image of the pretty Alice haunted his mind. Although she was often on deck, yet he could seldom find an opportunity to speak to her. Whenever she saw him approaching she would contrive to engage the old skipper or her friend Thad in earnest conversation, or else she would enter the cabin.

These maneuvers she performed in such a manner that Hal, who was of an unsuspecting nature, did not dream that she *purposely* avoided him. He only wondered why "the fates" persisted in denying him the chance to improve his acquaintance with a young girl who had so favorably impressed him.

Once he consulted his friend Rock on the subject. The old tar seated upon the winlass, smoking his "finback," as he called his curious pipe, heard him through with a grim smile. Then he stood up, thrust both hands into his pockets, spread out his legs like an open compass, and, working the bowl of the finback so far round that it almost touched his ear, looked his young chum for some time, in silence.

"You're in love, Hal," he said, at last. "Ay, ay, and how do you expect that it's to go smooth in sich an unlucky craft as this? Nothing ever *did* go right in this craft, and nothing ever will! Don't think of the gal any more, unless you want to come to grief."

"I *must* think of her; I can't help it," said Hal, frankly.

"Women," continued Rock, puffing a tall spout from the finback, "is mystifying, and the sooner we come to the point with 'em, the better. There's no use of beating about the bush where *they're* concerned—no, indeed! Drive right at 'em like a chain shot, if you want 'em, and let 'em know it. That's the way I did with Polly Rock, bless her poor, dead ones, and she made me a faithful spouser" (spouse) "while she lived. In *this* craft, however," he added, solemnly, "courting is out of the question. There never'll be any good luck—"

"A mere fancy," interrupted his chum.

"No," he replied, solemnly, taking the pipe from his mouth; "it isn't fancy—it's *rats*!"

"Rats?"

"Ay, ay; she's an old craft, but there isn't a rat in her."

At that moment the striking of the bell reminded Ben that it was his turn to take the wheel, so he knocked the ashes from the finback, and hurried aft.

Just then Mrs. Camp came on deck, followed by Alice. The old lady turned and said a few words to the steward, who, soon after, made his appearance with a trunk, which he laid at her feet. She unlocked it, and taking out her son's best clothes, spread them carefully upon the top of the cabin. The sailors were used to seeing her do this; she took good care of his clothes; he should find them in order, she said, when he "came aboard."

She spoke of his coming aboard in a quiet, confident way, that made the old skipper shudder, for he felt quite sure that their son was dead. He could not bear to express this opinion to his wife, for, during the past few weeks, while the Luck *My* boned steadily upon her course, under every thing she could carry, the old lady's eyes were observed to shine under her wrinkled brow with joyful expectation.

Turning, now, to Alice, while smoothing the young captain's bronzed coat, a glad smile broke over her face.

"It'll almost make my heart young again," she said, "to see this garment on my boy."

"It always became him well," said Alice.

"Yes, every thing became *him*, because he was so well formed; but this coat was his favorite—he'll be glad enough

to see it again. He wore it the last time he went to church with you; don't you remember?"

"Yes—and I felt quite proud of my cavalier. I hope to see the time when he and I shall go to church again."

"I hope you will," said Mrs. Camp, her eyes looking quite mischievous under her spectacles. "He was a noble son and will make you a good husband—nothing will please me better than to see you married."

"Oh! I didn't mean that," said Alice, gravely.

Then she kissed the old lady's brow affectionately, and smoothed her gray hair.

A footstep sounded near her; she looked up, and there stood Hal, his eyes turned admiringly on her face.

"This dropped from your hair," he said, half reluctantly presenting a small ribbon.

She thanked him, her lashes drooping as she spoke, and thrust the ribbon into an apron pocket.

"Yes," continued the old lady, so busy brushing the coat that she had neither seen nor heard the intruder. "Yes, Alice, I shall most gladly consent to your marriage with my son!"

Hal started; the first real pang of sorrow that he had ever felt on his own account, pierced his heart like a knife. He turned and walked away.

"She's engaged, old chum—*engaged*, it seems," he whispered to Rock, a moment later. "I *am* come to grief, as you predicted."

"Ay, ay, lad; and I'm flattered by your making me your confidant. She shall never know what's a-feeding on your clock through me; not a bit of it. Keep up your spirits, and stick to your duty, and you'd forget her after a while."

"I'll try to," said Hal; "it's my duty to; but I'm afraid I'll have to look at blue water for many years before I do."

And he turned and walked into the waist.

"Rrs," said Rock, solemnly; "it's all owing to them crabs' leavin' the ship."

Just then Captain Camp came limping out of the cabin on his crutch. He stood watching old Martha for some time; then he glanced aloft at his royal and studding-tails.

"Shorten sail, sir," he said, reluctantly, turning to Squid.

"No! Oh, no!" cried the old lady, rising, and tottering to her husband's side. "Don't! don't! we are going along so nicely! We will soon reach the northern sea at this rate!"

"But we are now on the cruising ground," replied Camp. "We must cruise a while for whales. I promised the owners I would."

"Yes—after we had found *him*," she replied; "but now; we must first make a straight passage for that Kamtchatka Sea, and look for our boy!"

Camp turned aside his head and bit his lips. "Little good," thought he, "will our going north do us; the poor lad is dead and gone; there is no hope of finding him. Anything to humor *her*, however."

And he called Squid back.

"Never mind shortening sail," said he.

"There'll be some grumbling among the men," whispered the second officer; "they are all wondering why we don't reef for a cruise."

"Call 'em aft, here," said Camp—"all hands."

"This was done; the men were ranged on the lee-side of the deck, and the skipper, in a few brief words, made known to them his intentions.

"There'll be no cruising," said he, "until we get into the Kamtchatka Sea; but, if we happen to see whales, we'll lower for them."

The men exchanged glances; many of them looked surly and discontented.

"Out of my own pocket," continued the skipper, "I will pay you, as it's my duty to do, enough to make up for the good chances we may lose."

"It won't do." "We shipped for whaling." "You won't know how *much* to give us to make up;" and similar observations, broke from the men.

Their voices grew louder and more angry every moment; the captain was unable to make himself heard; he flung his crutch menacingly.

Then a yell of fierce rage broke from the crew; one of Tom Henderson's friends sprung to the front of the line, and in a loud, bullying voice threatened to persuade all hands to

knock off duty unless sail was immediately shortened for a cruise.

At this juncture, the old lady confronted the crew. Her cheeks glowed, her frame trembled, her eyes shone.

"Men," she began, sorrowfully but proudly, "I have a son."

Those five, simple words hushed the clamor at once; every man was still; every man thought of his own mother; every man took off his hat.

"I have a son," she went on—"a noble boy! He is far away, cooped up somewhere on that dreary northern shore! He lives; but he will starve to death—he *will* die, unless we get there in time! Help me! Oh! help me find my poor boy!"

Now her hands were clasped; her face pale and full of anxious pleading, her eyes seemed to grow brighter and wilder, every moment.

An electric thrill ran through the human line. Some of the men cheered; others shouted "We will! We will!"

"God bless ye, lads!" cried Camp, "God bless ye!"

The men cheered again and went forward.

From that moment there was no more grumbling in the ship.

Early, the next morning, the shrill cry of "Sail O!" came down from aloft. To the usual question, "Whereaway?" the lookout replied, "A point off the lee-bow!"

Camp looked through his glass, and pronounced the stranger a whaler; he could make out her boats. Soon she was near enough to enable him to discover by her appearance that she was homeward-bound. Her sides were streaked with crust, and, every time she rolled, she disclosed a crust of barnacles, clinging to her lower timbers.

Old Martha heard that the Luck was approaching a homeward-bound craft. She made her way to the deck as quickly as she could, panting with the eager hope of hearing news of her son. Soon after, the stranger crossed the Luck's wake, when, the usual hails being exchanged, Camp learned that the name of the other craft was the Commerce. "Clear away the starboard boat!" he cried, in a voice that thrilled like the clang of a hammer through every part of the ship.

"What was the name?" inquired Martha, eagerly.

"The Commerce; it was a boat's crew from this craft which, according to the story of that Portuguese in New Bedford, picked up the body of—of—I mean what was thought to be the body of our son."

"You are going on board. I must go with you," pleaded his wife.

So, when the starboard boat was lowered, the old lady sat on the stern-sheets trembling all over with excitement.

Soon, the light craft was alongside of the Commerce, and its occupants on board. The captain, a tall man with a rugged face, a herculean pair of shoulders, and a remarkably small, thin voice, received the other skipper and his wife, cordially, if not politely.

"Welcome, cap—thrice welcome; blast your eyes, my man, make yourself at home; and you my dear old lady. We'll all be young a hundred years from now! Ho! ho! ho! captain, step into the cabin and have some punch; your lady likes punch too, I hope; mine is fond of it and would like to take a glass with her."

"My son! my son! tell me about my son!" cried Martha, eagerly. "They said that you picked up his body; but I would not believe it; I know it was not his body! Oh! no! no! no!"

The tall captain looked puzzled, until Camp made the necessary explanations.

"Yes," he then said, "there was a body picked up; but it was my second-mate who saw it, not I. It wasn't brought aboard. I forget the description of it, and I'm afraid that there isn't a man now in the craft who saw it; the second-mate and his boat's crew having deserted me when within a day's sail of the Sandwich Islands."

"Try and think of the description," said Camp, "something about the dress, the face, the hands—any thing?"

"Yes. Oh! yes any thing! any thing!" moaned the old lady. The skipper reflected.

"It's no use!" he said, at length, "I can't think of any thing except their telling me that his hair was *brown*!"

"*Brown*? brown? O God, no! no!" gasped Martha. "You have made a mistake, you don't mean *brewn*!"

"Perhaps I am mistaken," said the captain, "but I couldn't say for certain. Ah! let me see!" he suddenly added, "now I think of it, our cook went in the boat, on the day that body was found."

"And is he now in the ship?"

"Yes. Here, Monk, this way!" he shouted to a stout, flat-faced Malay, who was passing into the galley.

The man obeyed.

"You were with the boat's crew that picked up the dead body?", said camp.

"Yes. Hi! hi! in de ice; hair stiff as one stick, eye wide open. Berry, berry cold body—lay over on back—dis way."

And the Malay stretched himself on the deck, by way of illustration.

"That will do!" said Camp; and as the man jumped to his feet, old Martha's trembling hands were on his arm, and her eyes wildly and eagerly bent upon his face.

"Describe it," she gasped, "describe how the—the—body looked—every thing about it—the eyes, the hair—"

Here she paused, choking with excitement.

"Well, den, let's see. De eye, de eye *gray*—de—"

"My God, *his* eyes were gray?" screamed the old lady clasping her hands. "Go on—go on," she moaned.

"De hair *brun*, dark brown, me think—not sure; forget about hair."

"Go on!" gritted Camp, as the man paused, startled by the wild gleam of those aged eyes, fixed so earnestly on his face.

"De body, me think, pretty long; 'bout what you call five feet ten."

"Our boy's was six feet," said Martha, a gleam of hope lighting her face. "He lives! he lives! I feel it," she added, her eyes beaming with wild joy.

Camp, however, shook his head. The Malay might be mistaken.

"How was the body dressed?" he inquired. "Our boy's outfit was peculiar; I remember it well."

He drew the man aside as he said this.

"Gray pants, woollen cap, guernsey frock with anchor work on de sleeves; blue anchor!"

Camp started and turned pale. Alice had worked, with blue worsted, an *anchor* on each sleeve of a "guernsey" that the young man had taken to sea with him.

"What did he say?" inquired Martha, quickly approaching.

"Nothing, nothing important," said the skipper. He feared that if he told her about the anchor, she would drop dead at his feet.

"The body was not our boy's. I told you so," said the old lady, trembling all over with joy. "He lives; let us hasten to our own ship and continue on our course."

She moved toward the rail as she spoke, when Camp quickly turned toward the Malay.

"Any thing more about that body?"

"Yes, me found this on middle finger of right hand," and he drew from his pocket an ivory ring, curiously carved, and on the center of which were inscribed the letters T. C. "He give it you, if you want," he continued.

"Ay, ay," gasped the old skipper, as he hastily thrust the ring into his pocket, "it was *his*, my son's. He carved it from a piece of a whale's tooth. No doubt now, about the boy's death," he added. "I knew it! I knew it!"

And the tears started to his eyes.

He hobbled forward to hide his emotion from his wife. When he returned to the quarter deck, the captain of the *Commerce* introduced him to his first officer, Mr. Brown.

"I understand," said the latter, "that you are the father of young Captain Camp. Are you *certain* your son was lost?"

"I *am*," said the old man gloomily, "quite certain of it now. But why do you ask about my son?"

His wife hearing the question, came to his side.

"Well—I—I—it may have been fancy—at least, so Captain Boone thinks, but I feel quite positive."

"What's the use of raising useless hopes?" interrupted Boone. "Blast ye for a tattler, Brown, you'd better keep a still tongue about a mere fancy."

The mate colored, and was turning away when Mrs. Camp caught his arm and begged him to go on with his story.

"All right, leave ahead, Brown, if she wishes it," said Boone, "always oblige the ladies, young or old."

"Well," said Brown, "what I am going to say may not seem of much importance. It was about eight bells in the first night watch, d'ye see, and our ship was passing a headland in the Kamtschatka. The weather was a-setting foggy, and I was leaning over the quarter rail, looking up at the moon which, seen through the gathering mist, looked like the face of a drowning man away down in the water, when I thought I heard a faint shout over my head. That startled me somewhat, although I ain't at all superstitious, for I knew there wasn't anybody aloft at that hour; I listened, however, and I heard the shout again; this time it wasn't over my head, it had only sounded so before, owing to my position—but it seemed to come from the headland. Our ship was running along pretty fast under whole topsails as we were bound out of the sea; but with a night glass, I had time enough to see standing on the headland what looked to me like a human figure. I only got one glimpse of it, however, for the fog thickened the next minute so as to hide it from my gaze. I ran down into the cabin and told Boone about it; but he seemed to think it was merely my fancy, voice and all, and I ain't sure," added the narrator, who was a very meek, submissive-looking man, "but what it was; in fact it must have been if *he* says so."

"Ay, ay, the voice you heard, was that of a seal, I'll warrant," roared Boone, "and the figure nothing but a rock."

"Perhaps so; in fact very *likely*," said the submissive mate.

"I think so, too," said Camp.

"And I *don't*!" cried old Martha. "I think Mr. Brown really saw and *really* heard what he thinks he did. The voice and figure were our son's. Come," she said, eagerly, seizing her husband's arm, "come, let us hurry aboard! We have no time to lose! Mr. Brown will describe to us, before we go, the place where he saw our boy; the latitude, the longitude, the looks of the land!"

Camp turned aside his head; his lips were compressed, his face gloomy. It grieved him to the soul to hear the old lady go on in this way, about the son whom he felt quite sure was dead.

Brown turned his meek eyes upon his captain, as the old lady spoke.

"The skipper can describe it to you, ma'am, better than I can," he said, "he speaks of it in his log book."

"Any thing to oblige the ladies, young or old," said Boone, and he ordered the steward to bring up the log book.

The man obeyed.

"Let me see," said the captain, as he turned over the leaves. "Ah! here it is!" he added, and then read as follows:

"At eight bells, first night watch, while near lat. 60° lon. 111° w., Brown came running into the cabin, saying he heard voice, and saw man on headland we were passing. Mem: Brown is easily scared; therefore felt certain it was merely fancy on his part."

"But the land—haven't you a description of the land?" inquired Martha.

"No, ma'am. As it was in the night time we couldn't see any thing of the land, except a few rocks and the promontory."

"Come, let us go," said Camp.

"But the latitude and longitude, you haven't put it down," exclaimed the old lady. "For heaven's sake, don't forget that!"

The skipper produced his note book; his hand trembled so that he could scarcely use his pencil.

A quarter of an hour later, Mrs. Camp entered her own cabin, and, trembling all over with joyful excitement, related to Alice what she had heard.

Not long after, the young girl came on deck and was surprised to see the old skipper leaning sad and moody over the quarter-rail.

She glided to his side.

"Oh! papa! what good news!" she exclaimed, "I am so glad, so *very* glad!"

The captain looked at her; he seemed to reflect a few moments. Then he drew from his pocket the ivory ring received from the Malay.

Alice knew the ring; the story of that and the blue anchor were soon told. The young girl grew very pale.

"She does not know it," said he. "You must not tell her; it would kill her *now*."

"I know it, I know it," gasped Alice. Then her face was lighted with a faint hope.

"If the body found in the ice was that of our Thomas, and oh! papa there is a possibility that it may not have been after all, who was the man seen on the headland?"

"There was no man. The captain of the Commerce is sure the mate was deceived, and I am of the same opinion."

From that moment, Alice could never hear the old lady speak of finding her son, without feeling a choking sensation in her throat.

CHAPTER V.

THE LOOSE TIMBER.

THE Luck was favored with a steady breeze until she arrived off Cape Horn. Then Camp was obliged to keep his ship full and by, and shorten sail, for head-winds now prevailed, and the weather was treacherous. The timbers of the old craft groaned a dismal response to the swashing seas and howling gales by which they were frequently assailed. Ben Rock, lying warm and comfortable in his bunk, during his watches below, would often shake his head ominously, as he listened to a certain loud creaking under the bows. There was a timber loose somewhere in that quarter, he often declared to his shipmates and to the captain; the carpenters, he said, must have slurred over their work, and that loose timber would yet be the ruin of the old vessel.

Accordingly, the skipper had on several occasions sent his carpenter into the lower hold to make an examination, and each time the carpenter had reported that, as far as he could discover, every timber was sound and in its proper place.

Rock, however, stoutly insisted that something was wrong about the bows of the craft under water; he had not heard that creaking, he said, during the other voyage.

One morning early, while the old tar lay in his bunk

smoking his "finback," he heard the quick tramping of men and officers, and the noise of yards and ropes moving. An instant later, the cry of "All hands ahoy! Tumble up here and take in sail!" rung in his ears.

He knocked the ashes from his pipe, slipped into his clothes in a twinkling, and was on deck the first man.

Glancing off the weather bow, he saw the rack and the port of a terrific gale approaching. The giant clouds, driving toward the ship, seemed fairly to touch the sea—to mingle with the spray that was tossed from the advancing walls of water.

Near the binnacle stood Camp, giving directions to the man at the wheel, while Squid, with the assistance of half a dozen men, was lashing the boats and battening down the hatches.

The fore and mizzen topsails had been clewed up, and the main clewed down, ready for close-reefing; men were out on the booms, furling the jibs.

The crew therefore were not long in reducing the ship's canvas to a close-reefed main topsail and topmast staysail.

"Now then, up with that wheel!" shrieked Camp; and, as the vessel fell off, the storm burst upon her with terrific fury.

Shrouded in the black sea of the tempest, with the water bursting and booming over both rails, and the spray leaping almost to her three mastheads, she bounded and writhed and rolled and struggled on her course. The main topsail, bursting clear of the sheet, slatted about for a moment with the noise of rolling thunder, and then flew in shreds to leeward. A darkness, almost like that of night, extended around the ship as far as the men could see; the vessel seemed rolled up in a shroud of clouds, while all around her the phosphor lights of ocean shone like a constellation of stars.

Tranquet in hand, leaning upon his crutch, and firmly grasping a piece of running rigging, the old skipper turned his broad wrinkled face to the tempest, and watched it with a sort of quiet defiance. The seas occasionally bursting over and around him, did not disturb him in the least; he shook the spray from his drenched garments like an old bull-dog.

The crew now gathered under the round-house—for the forward part of the vessel was almost continually buried—and watched their captain with respect and admiration. By

kindness and firmness combined, he had won their esteem; he seemed like a good parent to them, and in an hour like the present, his calm face inspired them with confidence.

A gray head was thrust through one of the cabin windows, and the voice of the old lady was heard.

"Will the storm injure us?" she inquired, anxious; "Will it cripple us so that there will be any delay in our proceeding?"

"I trust not. Go below, Martha, go below."

She closed the window and obeyed. It was well she did so; a tremendous wall of water broke over the ship, and a crash was heard, as the top of the cabin was swept to leeward. The captain just saved himself from being washed away by dodging back.

Now the water came pouring over the rails, and dashed like a cataract down the unprotected companionway, until Trevor, springing into the steerage hatch, procured some planks and a tarpaulin, which, with the assistance of a few of the men he nailed over the opening, leaving a space large enough to admit a human body.

Suddenly Rock bounded into the waist and picked up a piece of timber that had been dashed aboard by a wave, and which, but for his activity, must have been carried over the lee rail.

He carried it aft and showed it to the captain.

"I always said she was an unlucky craft, sir," he whispered, "and here's proof of it. If I ain't mistaken, this is a piece of that loose timber I've heard a-creaking of late."

The skipper examined the wood narrowly.

It was about four feet in length, and three inches broad—was rotten and perforated with small holes like honeycomb; it looked as if it had been stripped from one of the ship's timbers by human hands.

The captain started and shrugged his shoulders; but the crew were watching him; it would not do to alarm inexperienced men like them. He regained his composure in a moment, but shot a significant glance into the eyes of old Rock.

The latter understood him at once.

"Captain," said he, as the skipper carelessly thrust the

piece of wood into the round house, "hadn't we better rig the pumps?"

"Ay, ay," replied Camp, "you might as well, if it's only to give the men a little exercise, which is needed in such chilly weather."

Accordingly, the pumps were rigged and the hands lashed to the mainmast, were soon taking their regular turns. Every sea that swept the ship drenched them to the skin, but they worked manfully, glad of the opportunity for warming themselves even by hard labor. "Green" as they were, they could not help noticing that an unusual quantity of water poured through the spout; but they attributed this to the gale, not for a moment suspecting that the rotten piece of wood they had seen had any connection with the matter.

Rock, who with Trevor superintended the work, occasionally lending a helping hand, frequently exchanged stealthy, ominous glances with the fourth-mate and the old skipper.

The gale raged with unabated fury, and as the Luck rolled and straggled on, that strange, creaking noise forward, which had excited Ben's suspicions, seemed to grow louder every moment.

In spite of his efforts to hide it, an expression of anxious concern flitted over the captain's brow as he listened and watched the dark-colored water, still flowing in torrents from the pump.

Two hours passed; the pump handle still clanged. The gale had subsided a little; the foresail and the fore-lizzen top-sail close-reefed, were set, and the wind having backed round, the vessel was now booming along upon her proper course. Still, a shadow rested upon the old man's wrinkled brow; he motioned the carpenter to his side and whispered a few words. Instantly the mechanic walked forward, the upper and lower hatches were taken off, and he descended into the hold.

"Well," said Camp, impatiently, when he returned.

"I can discover no leak; but there must be one somewhere, for the water is *gaining* on us."

"Hush! speak lower."

The caution came too late. One of the "green hands," as the greater portion of the Luck's crew were still termed, heard

the words, as he passed with a cup of drinking water, and reported them to his shipmates around the pump.

They received the news better than might have been expected; but they did not work with the same spirit as before. They thought more of the danger than they did of the pump.

"Come, lads, lively, lively; we'll soon have the old craft dry," cried Trevor, encouragingly, and seizing the pump handle, he assisted the men.

They caught the magnetism of his firm spirit, and stifling their fears, worked with almost superhuman vigor.

Whish-sh—whish-sh—whish-sh! came the water, however, in undiminished quantities.

How the news reached her it is hard to imagine; certain it is, however, that old Martha now thrust her head through the opening above the companionway, and tremulously calling her husband, inquired whether the leak was very bad, whether the vessel would be injured so that there would be much delay in their proceeding.

The captain looked troubled, and seemed to reflect as to what reply he should make.

"Tell me everything!" gasped Martha, "hide nothing from me, I beg."

"Well, then, unless we can discover the leak in the course of thirty-six hours, we may not expect to have a ship under our feet very long afterward."

"Our boy—our poor boy!" groaned the old lady, "we will never reach him—at any rate not in time to do him any good."

And tears of anguish coursed down her wrinkled cheeks.

"Cheer up, Martha, cheer up; we may find the leak and be able to stop it."

She wiped her eyes.

"Ay, ay, ma'am," cried Rock, who was not far off, "we may find it. The ship's a-rolling considerable now; but I'll go into the hold for all that, and I warrant ye I'll find that mysterious leak."

"If you do," said Camp, "You shall have a guinea for your pains—a bright guinea that I've had saved up this many a year."

"Keep your money, sir," said Rock, "I don't want it, thank

ye. Whatever danger there is it's worth risking for the old lady, so anxious about her son. Why, bless your eyes, I had a mother once and she was just like Mrs. Camp. So, knowing how she feels, I'm willing to help her all I can."

"God bless you!" said the captain's wife, "and when we find my son"—here the skipper turned aside to hide his gloomy face—"when we find him he may reward you at some future time, in the way you may like best."

Rock smiled, scraped his foot, bowed, and then proceeded to the fore-hatch. The hatches were taken off, and, provided with a lantern, the old tar crept into the lower hold. He crawled forward along the top of a tier of barrels until he had almost gained the bow, when fastening a rope around his waist, he proceeded to perform a feat that the carpenter had not dared to undertake—that Ben, himself, would not have undertaken for any body except an old mother in search of a lost son. Fastening the end of the rope to a hook, projecting from a beam over his head, he, with great difficulty, squeezed himself downward through a narrow opening between piles of heavy casks which with every roll of the ship pressed with painful force against his body, almost depriving him of breath. He persevered, however, and finally, his feet striking the ship's timbers, he stood up to his neck in water. The lantern which he had secured to his back was extinguished; he found himself in total darkness.

"Ay, ay," he muttered between his teeth, "who would expect any thing else in such an unlucky craft? Still, damn it, unless the leak can be stopped; the water reaches almost to my ears, already."

So saying he let go of the rope he had been holding, and dove. He was an excellent swimmer, capable of remaining under water almost as long as professional divers; so he now moved his hand rapidly over the timbers, feeling for the crevice that admitted the water. He discovered it in a few seconds; at the same instant the ship rolled over upon her beam ends, and he felt himself drawn some distance under water. On rising a moment later, his upturned head came into contact with a barrel that had been dislodged and fallen into the narrow passage through which he had squeezed himself, completely closing it up.

He shouted with all his might, explaining his situation, but there came no response; the men in the upper hold were too far off to hear his voice above the din of rushing waves and creaking timbers. Drawing himself up by the rope, he now braced his feet against the chimes of the casks and with head and shoulders endeavored to dislodge the barrel. His efforts were vain, he could not move the barrel an inch. Meanwhile, the water was of course rising higher every minute; it was necessary to stop the leak at once—equally necessary to have certain materials not in the old sailor's possession to accomplish the task in an effectual manner. However, stripping off his jacket and with the aid of his marlinespike—an ivory one, always secured to his waist by a lanyard—he set to work. Diving three or four times, he contrived to stop the leak after a "sartin lubberly fashion," as he expressed it, by punching and driving his woollen garment into the ugly seam.

Then he made another effort to move the barrel and succeeded, not to his satisfaction, however, for the heavy vessel, slipping farther down than it was before, caused him to jump back into the water. With every roll the barrel continued to slip; Ben was soon obliged to stoop until his ears touched the water, to avoid it. He braced his shoulder against it to prevent it from sliding farther, in which case it must force his head under. His situation was, in fact, critical. The weight of the barrel upon his shoulder was nearly a hundred pounds; the chimes cut his flesh almost to the bone. Still he dared not remove his shoulder; to do that would be to seal his doom at once. He was a strong man, but the continual pressure of the barrel made his brain reel; he felt confident that he could not long support such a weight. As his mouth, owing to his stooping position, was now almost on a level with the water, his shouts were half drowned. In fact the old tar had made up his mind to go under; unable longer to bear the weight of the barrel, he was about to remove his shoulder, when he heard above him the voice of Trevor who, alarmed at his long absence, was seeking for him.

"Here! here!" faintly cried the old tar, "if you'd save old Ben, you must at once contrive to lift this barrel from my shoulder! Don't go to breaking any bones on my account, however; I'm an old hulk, and ain't worth *that*."

"Cheer up, old chum! cheer up!" cried Trevor, "I've a rope with me, and will soon make things all right."

Through small crevices above, the bight of the rope was lowered, when Ben, quickly raising his left hand, pushed it under the barrel. Now the cheery order to haul was heard, and the barrel was soon clear of the old man's shoulder.

Ten minutes later, it was pulled out of the passage, when Rock left his uncomfortable quarters.

Trevor fairly embraced him.

"Rock, old chum, you're too sly," said he. "You ought to have told *me* what you intended doing. I'd never have allowed you to go; I'd have gone myself, instead. You've had a narrow escape."

"It's *rats*!" cried the old tar, solemnly, "not one of them creatur's troubled me while I was below."

Finally, he reached the deck and told his story to the captain, who conducted him into the cabin and treated him to a stiff glass of "hot stuff," which Alice had brewed. Martha prepared a bandage for his shoulder, but he declined it with thanks, saying that it would impede his motions.

Soon after, with his finback in his mouth, he was seen pouring a bucketful of salt water upon his wound.

"There's nothing like salts for all complaints, my lads; bear that in mind," he said, smiling grimly upon the green hands who stood watching him.

In the afternoon, the gale having nearly died away, the captain ordered his men to "break out" the lower fore-hold.

Enough barrels and casks were hoisted to afford the carpenter room to work upon the damaged timber; before night the leak was stopped as well as could be done under the circumstances.

CHAPTER VI.

OFF THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

DURING a fortnight after the gale off the Cape, the carpenter was very busy, repairing the damage described. By the time his work was finished, the *Luck* had passed the Isle of Desolation and was rolling along before a fair wind on her course to the Sandwich Islands. Two months later, she anchored off Honolulu; and the captain at once proceeded to make the necessary preparations for a long cruise in the Kamtchatka Sea. In the course of a few weeks, every part of the old craft had been examined, her timbers strengthened, her shrouds and stays set up anew, her sails patched and mended, her masts well scraped and slushed, and plenty of fresh water stowed in the main-hold.

On the day preceding that upon which Camp intended to leave the harbor, an old Kanaka boatman came aboard and asked for the captain. The latter heard him and came forward.

"Cap'n Camp," said the islander, "me hear 'bout you going to look for son; sailor me see ashore tell me."

Old Martha, leaning wearily against the quarter rail, caught the word "*son*," and tottering eagerly into the waist, confronted the native.

"Any news about *him*—about my son?" she inquired, "tell me, oh! tell me quick!"

"Me come aboard to speak you 'bout one steward who was in Norwich; he very sick—no think live long—in my hut—he hear about cap'n—father of *his* cap'n going to look for son; so me come to ship to bring you to hut. He like to speak you somet'ing."

"Oh! yes! yes!" cried old Martha, trembling in every limb, "we will go at once. My boy! my boy! We are to hear news of our boy! Good news—good news, is it not?" she added, clutching the islander's arm.

The native colored and lowered his eyes.

"Don't know," he replied, "he not care speak, dis steward; ne lose he tongue!"

"What do you mean?" cried Camp, sternly, "you just said he wanted to speak to us. I believe you are trifling with us, though why, I can't imagine."

"No, no! no me—"

"At any rate," interrupted Camp, "the person you speak of can not be the *steward* of that ill-fated ship, for I was informed by one of her own crew that he was washed overboard."

"Me know nothing 'bout it. Nothing! nothing! Steward can not speak with mouth; speak with paper this way," and he imitated the movement of writing with his finger.

"Ay, ay, I understand; and *you* can not read. Why didn't he send some writing to us? And how happens it that if he can not speak and you can not read, you know that he was the steward of the *Norwich*, and—"

"Missionary tell me; tell me he been picked up in Kamtchatka. Missionary not here now; gone to another island. De steward he *did* give me writing; me put in pocket, but me lose; got hole in pocket."

"That *was* unfortunate," said Camp, still doubting the truth of the man's story. "But, how did you know that you were to carry this letter of which you speak, to the *Luck*?"

"Me not know until me show to some sailor, American, who tell me."

"Come, Samuel, come!" said the old lady, trembling like a leaf with eager impatience, "let us go, at once! The poor steward may die before we get to him, and—"

"I doubt if there's any steward in the case," said Camp. "This islander has made some mistake. Still, in order to satisfy you, I will go. You had better stay aboard," he added, naturally fearing that any news of the lost one would prove to be bad.

"No, no, I must go with you; I should die before you came back!"

And she hurried into the cabin, from which she soon emerged, ready to start with Alice, who was to accompany her.

The starboard boat was lowered, and the party were soon

on their way with Trevor at the steering-oar, and five of the best "pullers" in the ship working with a will.

Soon, the boat struck the landing; the Kanaka guide sprang out, and turning to Trevor, the captain said in a low voice, "You had better go with us; so as to be ready for that native in case he means any humbug."

The party were soon in motion. The fourth-mate, holding Mrs. Camp's arm, helped her along as carefully and tenderly as he might have helped his own mother. The islander led them about half a mile along the "Old Road," when he turned to the right; after they had proceeded a short distance across a field they entered a small valley, and, a minute later, found themselves in front of the Kanaka's hut. The islander entered, and as they followed him, pointed to a mat in a dark corner.

The old lady tottered quickly forward; but owing to the darkness she was unable to see any thing, until she stooped quite low, when she beheld an emaciated figure clothed in a tattered jumper and patched sailor pants. A pair of sunken eyes were turned upon her face, an arm naked to the elbow was lifted in an instant; then it dropped heavily, while a hoarse guttural sound came from the throat.

A piece of paper, upon which Camp had scratched a few questions, was now given to the invalid; a look of intelligence flitted across his face as he read the lines, he pointed to a pen lying beyond his reach on the mat.

The old lady gave it to him; he raised himself feebly, then sunk back, gasping for breath, his hand on his heart. Alice picked up a cup lying near him, and ran out to fill it with water from a stream she had noticed before entering the hut. When she returned, the man's eyes were partially glazed.

He stooped quickly, and poured some of the water into his mouth. It revived him—he clutched the pencil—half raised himself on his elbow. "Inform me whether he was living or dead, when you last saw him, if you *did* see him?" cried Martha, in a faint voice, "and—and—"

The pencil had begun to move; now it suddenly stopped; the man's head fell back like a leaden weight.

Alice bent over him with her cup of water; then she started back uttering a low cry, for the man was dead.

At the same moment, a puff of wind blew the piece of paper through the entrance of the hut.

Trevor with a single bound, recovered it; as he turned, he met Martha coming toward him with outstretched hands.

"Give it to me!" she cried, "Oh! give it to me!"

He did so, and adjusting her spectacles, the old lady scrutinized the writing which, marked with a trembling hand, was very difficult to read. Soon she uttered a glad cry.

"He lives! he lives! thank God he lives!" she exclaimed, and almost wild with joy, she passed the paper to Camp.

The old man's spectacles were soon arranged; he scanned the writing carefully.

"*Your son—*" he read and then paused. The two letters of another word followed "*son.*"

"They're—'l—i'" said Martha, "very faint, but I could read them for all that."

"L—i?" repeated the captain, "I—I—can hardly read them; but—"

He stopped and turned aside his face.

"Samuel! Samuel! don't you know what they mean? They're the two first letters of 'lives,' lives is what he intended to write; our boy, our dear boy lives!"

And she turned to tell the good news to Alice, who was just stepping from the entrance of the hut. Camp quickly passed the paper to Trevor.

"Read, boy, read! for God's sake! *Perhaps* my old eyes deceived me, but I'm afraid not."

The fourth-mate read in a low voice, "*Your son d—i—*"

"Ah! I knew it, I knew it! it's a *d*, not an *l* as Martha thought; *d—i* which are the two first words of *dead*. '*Your son dead—*' that's what the poor fellow would have written had he lived long enough! Not a word to *her* about it," he added, in a whisper, pointing toward his wife, "at least not yet."

And seizing the paper, he tore it into pieces.

Old Martha now came back and asked for it; she wanted to show it to Alice.

"I have torn it," said Camp, "and tossed the pieces toward the east for good luck; it's a sailor fashion, and—and

—I'm still a little superstitious," he added, with a forced laugh.

The old lady was very sorry he had torn it. "However!" she cried, her eyes shining, "it does not matter much after all; for there's no danger of our forgetting what was written on it."

"Right, Martha, right," said the skipper, gloomily, "a new hat as good as new as soon as we can."

Trevor slipped a half-eagle into the Kanaka's hand.

"It's all I have," said he, "but it will help you give the dead man decent burial."

The party soon reached the boat; ten minutes later they were on board of the *Luck*.

Now, it was night. The moon was up in the clear sky; the waves rippled softly around the old ship. Old Martha went below sleepless, but full of happiness; the skipper locked himself in his room, Alice remained on deck.

The rays of the moon fell upon the young girl's brown hair, and pure white forehead, her tall but little figure was clearly defined in the soft light. Suddenly she felt a hand on her shoulder, and looking up she saw Rock.

"Begging your pardon, Miss," said the old tar, taking off his hat, "but I've come to speak to ye on a delicate pint."

"Go on, Ben," she replied, encouragingly, "I shall be glad to hear you."

"The pint I aint to is—is—well, Miss, it's *love*!"

She opened her blue eyes very wide; Rock colored and looked confused.

"Bless your pretty face, my lass, I don't mean that I'm a-going to make love to ye. I'm much too old for *that*; be as sure as what, Mrs. Rock in t'other world wouldn't ever forgive me. No, it's about *another* that I'm going to speak."

And, pointing toward his young charm, the fourth-mate who was now leaning over the waist rail, he winked first with one eye and then the other.

Alice blushed and trembled.

"I think I will go below," she said, "good-night, Ben."

"Ay, ay, that's the way with a feminine!" cried the old tar in a disappointed tone of voice, "to always run away when you speak of the man she likes. Mrs. Rock used to do that."

Alice stopped and turned. Now her pride was aroused; she was as calm as a clear sky in winter.

"You spoke of my *liking him*," she said, coldly. "What reason—what *right*, sir, have you—"

She paused: it was not in her nature to be severe. The old tar looked confused and troubled; it was evident his feelings were hurt; so she advanced and gently laid her hand on his shoulder.

"You meant no harm, Ben, I know," she said, "but—*but* your conclusion is without foundation, you—"

"Ay, ay," he interrupted, "p'raps I *was* mistaken after all, but he's a fine lad and I like him as I might an own son, and that's *why* I made the mistake. Besides he thinks so *much* of you; he's all wrapped up in you; t'other day he said—'There bless your eyes, I've done it!'" suddenly interrupted the old sailor. "I've blowed on the boy without thinking. I told him I wouldn't let you know how much he thought of you."

And he turned to quit the quarter deck.

"Ben," said Alice, softly, and her hand fell upon his arm as lightly as a snow-flake. "First tell me *what* he said the other day."

Her eyes shone like stars, her cheeks were aglow.

"I ought not to tell ye, I suppose; but perhaps as I've already said so much, I might as well—"

He paused, looking doubtful.

"Oh, yes, Ben," she said, patting him on the arm, "tell me, please."

"Well, then, he said as how he found it very hard to keep away from you—that, in spite of all he could do, he couldn't help thinking of you day and night, that you *was* the prettiest creature he had ever seen not even exceptin' a California gray."

"A what?"

"California gray: it's a whale, miss, a very handsome animal some of which are covered with white and yellow spots."

"Why, Ben! you are jesting, are you not?"

"Not a bit of it, miss. I've catched plenty of 'em; they—"

"No, no, but *he*—he did not compare me to—to—a whale?"

"Ay, ay, miss, that he did; he's very poetrycal, d'ye see

Hal is; them that's in love always is. I was, when I courted Mrs Rock, and says I to her one day, says I, 'Emma, you're a darlingest creatur'; you're a little devil fish,' which she took wonderful well, especially as I warn't as a general thing, much given to 'complements.' "

"You have made some mistake, I think," said Alice, "with regard to what your friend said of me."

"Bearing your pardon, I feel quite sartain I've not; however, I'll go and get him to say it over again."

And he hurried into the waist.

Alice saw him speak to the fourth-mate; a minute later she heard that officer utter a cry of dismay.

Soon, he confronted her, looking confused and troubled.

"My friend Rock," said he, "has, it seems, made a singular mistake. A few years a go, he and I shipped in a brig in which were two passengers, a Californian by the name of Gray, and his daughter, a beautiful girl. The other day we were speaking of you, when I said that I thought you were the finest-looking girl I had ever seen, not even excepting the Californian Gray's—meaning Gray's daughter, of course. I am very sorry that Rock should have misunderstood me in the strange way he did. You must have felt much offended."

"Oh, no! not in the least," she said, "I knew he was mistaken."

And she laughed merrily.

Soon, however, she became grave. The consciousness that Trevor loved her made her cheeks glow and her frame tremble. She was very happy for a few minutes; then she thought of young Camp and turned pale.

"Good-night," she filtered, and glided into the cabin.

Early on the next morning, the Luck sailed. She passed out of the harbor with a fair wind and was soon stretching away on her course to the north. A month later—on a clear, cold morning in April—Captain Camp informed his wife that the vessel was entering the Kamtschatka sea.

Up rose the old lady with flannel face and shining eyes. Forgetting cloak or bonnet in her excitement, she tottered toward the companionway. Before she reached it, however, Alice with nimble fingers had wrapped her up completely, and was herself ready to follow.

Both soon were on the quarter-deck. . . The sun was shining brightly, flashing far and near upon fragments and columns of floating ice. Here and there a seal was visible, sunning itself upon some frozen pinnacle; and occasionally, the walrus with its long jaw would lift its curious head above the surface of the sea, watching the vessel as it passed.

"I see no land," said Martha, much disappointed. "I was in hopes we were approaching the coast upon which my boy was wrecked."

"We will in good time, I have no doubt," said Alice.

"Ah! I shall feel very happy then," said Mrs. Camp, clasping her hands, "for I *know* we'll find him. That poor steward we saw at the island, wrote or at least, began to write that he was living. My boy! my boy!"

Alice turned aside to hide the tears that came to her eyes.

She knew of the old lady's mistake with regard to the writing on the slip of paper. Camp had informed her of it shortly after the vessel had left the harbor.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Camp. "We shall find him safe and well, and—"

The ship rolled and struck a heavy fragment of ice, that made every timber reel. Old Martha lost her balance and would have fallen, but for Trevor, who, passing at the time, threw an arm around her. Tenderly and reverentially, he helped Alice replace the old lady's cloak, which had become dissarranged.

"Thank you," said Martha. "You are a very good young man, and have done a great deal for us."

"Not much," he said, "I wish I could do *more*."

And as he passed on, he glanced significantly toward the captain, who had just come up.

"Ay, ay," muttered the skipper, gloomily. "He wishes he could bring the dead to life; that's what he meant. Poor Martha! She won't live long after she learns the truth."

The old lady was now scrutinizing the face of the young girl by her side. It paled and flashed by times; the upper lip trembled.

"Alice, child, what is the matter?"

"Nothing, mamma," she answered faintly. "I—I believe I have a slight headache—that's all."

She would not own that her heart ached, too; that the presence of the fourth-mate, who had for a long time contrived to keep aloof from her side, had again roused in her bosom those pleasurable sensations which she felt it was her duty to repress, while the old lady still indulged the hope of marrying her to the young captain. It was this struggle to stifle her innocent emotions that now made her tremble, and pained both heart and brain.

"Come below," said the old lady, caressing the brown hair. "Come below, and we will have a cup of strong tea."

CHAPTER VII.

A WHALE-SPOUT.

IN spite of the ice, head-winds, contrary currents, etc., etc., the Luck—thanks to her skillful navigator—arrived, in the course of a few weeks, within a couple of leagues of the latitude and longitude marked in the captain's diary. Old Martha had scarcely slept for a whole week. In the day, regardless of rain, snow, or cold, she would stand leaning for hours over the bulwarks, with her eyes earnestly fixed upon the land to winnow. She knew that careful lookouts were at the three mastheads, and that they had received orders to watch for a signal; but she feared that they might overlook some slight sign ashore, which she felt confident could not escape her eyes, although they were weakened by age. In vain the captain intervened with her, and Alice begged her to be more careful of herself—both fearing that she would take cold; she shook her head, and said that she would not live if they deprived her of the pleasure of watching for "her boy."

In the late hours of night she was often heard walking her little room; on many different occasions, Alice had opened her eyes to see the fond mother bending over her son's trunk, arranging, folding, and rearranging, again and again, those "best clothes," which were to delight the young captain when "he should be brought aboard."

The morning was clear and cold. The old lady had taken her usual position by the weather-rail. Between ship and shore, and also ahead, huge blocks and columns of ice flashed in the sunlight.

Suddenly, a prolonged cry came down from the masthead, penetrating to every corner of the ship.

Old Martha was a little deaf.

"Do they see any thing?" she anxiously inquired, laying her hand on the captain's arm. "Do they see a signal?"

"No; it is a spout!" replied the captain, as he lolled in the waist. "Whereaway?" he shouted, looking aloft.

"Two points off the lee bow, about a mile and a half distant!" was the reply.

"Back the main yard!" howled Camp, the fire of the chase burning in his old eyes.

And no wonder; the whale now in sight was the first, worth lowering for, that had been seen since the vessel left New Bedford.

The main yard was soon aback.

Long-limbed, yellow-faced Squid, active as a tiger, leaped into his boat, in which the Gayheader stood, arranging his "craft" (rons etc.). He had boasted that he would fasten to the first whale, this voyage.

"D'ye see! 'sharkish,' Rad—ch, boy?"

"Ay, ay; soon find out," answered the Gayheader, with a grin that shewed his white teeth.

"Mind you fasten to that whale, Antoine, the first man," said Clip, addressing his harpooner, a stout, chunky Portuguese, with enormous feet.

"Me give him plenty iron!" chuckled Antoine. "No tink dat Gayhead go ahead of us."

"Lively there, Hal!" growled Camp, as he pulled a woollen cap over his grizzly head. "You must be the first to plant an iron in that fish!"

The skipper's harpooner—Trevor, the fourth-mate—turned round with a confident smile:

"I've put that whale down for mine, captain!"

At that instant Martha came to her husband's side.

"This will delay us!" she cried sadly, "for many hours. Don't lower; wait until we have found our boy!"

A gloomy look passed over the captain's face.

"God help ye, poor Martha," he said, huskily. "I wouldn't lower if it could be helped, for your sake. But I've given my word; besides which there isn't oil enough in the craft to keep the lamps burning another night. Unless we have oil we can't continue our search."

"So be it, then—so be it," she replied, resignedly, and she turned back to the weather-rail, with tears in her eyes.

"Lower away!" howled Camp, like a famished wolf; and the four boats dropped into the water.

As is customary, the three mates of the larboard, waist and bow boats, waited until the captain's had rounded the stern, before they gave the order to "give way."

Then the oarsmen made their blades bend, and away to leeward went the four boats—the captain's the foremost.

There he stood—old Camp—his gray hair waving round his iron-colored face, his blue eyes flashing under his shaggy brows with the fires of other days, while in a low voice, something like the roaring of a lion, he encouraged his men. Rock, whose arms were bared to the elbows, disclosing anchors, bracelets, cables, and other curious marks in Indian ink, pulled the bow oar with a long, steady, man-o'-war stroke, that made the boat fairly jump.

A few fathoms astern, came Squid's swift-keeled craft. The long, lithe figure of the second-mate bent forward in a half-crouch, and clad in checkered shirt and pants, resembled a serpent with head uplifted to get sight of its prey.

The other two boats now were about twenty fathoms behind.

"There go flukes!" cried Clip, and the whale, a mile ahead of the foremost boat, went down.

"Easy!" growled Camp, as the men pulled with unabated vigor; "easy is the word."

"The second-mate is passing us," said the man amidships.

"Let him go," gritted Camp, smiling grimly.

"Hooray! hooray!" shouted Squid's crew, as they shot ahead of the captain's boat.

This galled the skipper's men; all, with the exception of Rock, began to pull like Bedlamites.

"D'ye hear, there—easy!" grumbled old "iron-face."

Those he addressed obeyed, looking much discontented; they didn't relish seeing Squid shooting on far ahead of them. Soon, even the other two boats had caught up with and passed them.

Then they exchanged glances and ground their teeth; except Rock, who quietly thrust an enormous chew of tobacco into his right cheek.

Buz-z-z! buz-z-z-z!

The "green" men looked at each other in amazement; one of them was about to speak, when "Silence! it's the whale!" hissed Camp, through his closed teeth. "Your paddles! No noise!" he continued.

A number of little eddies, growing larger every moment, were seen about seven fathoms ahead of the boat.

Now the three boats ahead were observed to turn back, Squid's promising to take the lead.

"Too late! Our whale!" whispered Camp. "Stand up, Hal!"

As he spoke, all the eddies were merged into one great bubbling circle; then, with a rush and a roar, up rose the huge, barnacled hump of the whale.

"Let him have it!" howled Camp, and the iron flew whizzing from Trevor's hand into the monster's hump.

Before he could seize his second iron, a bight of the running line, as the whale surged to one side, flew up and caught the skipper around the waist.

There was a cry of horror; Hal turned like lightning, saw the captain's danger, and, with a single blow of the boat's hatchet, severed the line.

"Now then!" exultingly cried Squid, whose boat was his, within seven fathoms of the leviathan, which had not yet sounded—"Our whale, after a'!"

Up rose the long arms of the Gayheader, poising the barbed iron; but before it could leave his hands, old Rock, who had snatched up Hal's second iron, planted his right knee on the bow, and drove the barbed steel to the socket in the monster's hump!

"Our whale," he growled, with quiet satisfaction, "not yours!"

Down went the leviathan, whirling a cloud of spray around the boat. At the same moment something whizzed through the air; it was the Gayheader's harpoon, darted too late to take effect.

Spid threw off his cap and stamped upon it, yelling with rage and bitter disappointment, while past him, like an arrow, shot the starboard boat, its crew yelling like wild Indians.

The whale came booming up in the midst of the ice.

"Haul line!" gritted Camp; and the boat was soon within darting distance. The skipper had by this time exchanged places with his fourth-mate, whose duty it now was to work the light vessel.

Whis-s-t! whiz z-z! went the old man's lance, and the blade was buried among the protuberant barnacles of the monster ahead.

Round he came, vengefully lashing the water with his flakes, and making a straight wake for the boat.

"Starn! starn!" bellowed the skipper, in a voice like a mad bull's; and, while he spoke, he plunged his long lance again and again into the whale's body. Soon he touched the life-spot, when a thick, black fountain of blood rose from the monster's spout-holes. A minute later, he rolled over upon his side, quite dead.

Rock now took out his finback and lighted it, after which he assisted Trevor in the preparations for towing the whale.

While thus occupied, the old tar, happening to glance toward an iceberg ahead of the boat, distinguished something dark, which was revealed every time one side of the floating mass was lifted up by the passing waves. At first he thought it was a seal, but he was soon convinced that it was not; it looked like a checker-board.

"Ay, ay, now, who's been a-playin' checkers here on an iceberg?" he exclaimed. "It's the wonderfulest thing I ever heard of—gambling in such cold quarters as them, yonder!"

His companions were also much surprised; all were of the opinion that the object was a checker-board, firmly wedged in an icy fissure.

"With your leave, sir," said Rock, turning to the captain, "I can go and get it in the tying of a square knot; seeing

as the bergs are so closely packed ahead, it'll be like stepping from one stone to t'other."

The captain gave his consent, and Rock sprung from the boat upon the nearest berg. Soon he picked up the supposed cleek-board, which proved, however, to be a Scotch cap, that had caught upon a projecting point of the ice.

He examined it carefully, and perceiving that it was clean, and large enough to fit his ponderous skull, he threw his old glazed hat into the sea, and giving his new-found treasure a thorough wringing out, put it upon his head.

"I've always been unlucky about hats and caps," he said, when he entered the boat. "When I was a little shaver and went to school, I was always a-losing my cap, and since I took to the sea, the same results has followed. I've lost ten tarpaulins and as many sou'-westers within the last three years. The one I just throwed away wasn't fit to wear, but the one I've found suits me wonderful, as it's the kind I've always wanted; it seems as if Providence throwed it in my way; and I'll hang onto it while I live. Nothing, *nothing* will tempt me to part with it," he added, shaking his head in the negative, as he encountered the covetous eyes of a Portuguese who pulled the tub oar.

Soon, the other boats arrived, and the towing of the whale was commenced. In a couple of hours it was safe alongside the Luck, when the captain ordered all hands to get ready for "cutting and heaving in."

The shades of night now were settling around the vessel. As the captain passed into the cabin, he heard a tottering step behind him, and turning, encountered the gleam of Martha's mournful eyes.

"Now," she said, "now we can go on."

"Not until the whale is in," he answered, "and that will be about midnight."

"So long!" she said, plaintively, "so long! Ah, Samuel, you don't love our boy as I do, or you couldn't wait so long."

"Go below, Martha, and keep yourself warm. The deck is no place for you, such a cold night. Come," he added, persuasively, taking her hand, "come below with me, and I will talk with you about our boy; about the old times when

he cheered the little stone house with his bright face and pleasant ways !”

“As he will do again,” she said, a little pettishly, “why don’t you say, as he will do again?”

This time Camp did not reply; he conducted her into the cabin in silence.

An hour later, the moon lighted the dark faces and stalwart forms of the whalers as they worked at the blades, heaving in the whale.

Strip after strip of blubber swung inboard at intervals, and was lowered by the huge tackle attached to it, into the main hold. By midnight, as the captain had predicted, the work of “heaving and cutting in” was finished, and men with axes now proceeded to separate the huge slabs of bone attached to the whale’s jaw. This duty was soon accomplished; then, having ordered the main yard braced forward, and the vessel put upon her course, Camp went below to “turn in.” Old Rock was at the wheel, keeping the ship upon a beam-line. He had worked very hard and felt tired and sleepy; yet with that curious simplicity which blends with the roughness of some old sailors, he kept congratulating himself upon the finding of the Scotch cap.

“Ay, ay,” he muttered, “there’s a Providence in the matter. I was in want of a cap, and here’s one comes right in my way; it’s wonderful. I’ll sew a pair of strings to it, and have ’em fastened carefully whenever it blows, so as not to lose this one as I have all t’others.”

Just then, he saw a bowed figure emerge from the companionway; it was old Martha who, as she was in the habit of doing, had come up to look at the compass. Now, however, as she advanced toward the binnacle, Ben thought she eyed him with a peculiar look. She took out her spectacles, carefully adjusted them, and advanced close to his side.

“That cap!” she exclaimed, “that cap!”

“Ay, ay, that ’m,” said Ben, “it’s a good, comfortable cap, and I’m very glad I am that I came to find it. I’ve lost all t’others I ever had, but this shan’t ever go off my head, though as this is an unlucky craft, I shouldn’t wonder if I should lose the article by hook or by crook.”

"I ought to know that cap," gasped the old lady. "Yes, yes, I ought to know it!"

"Beggin' your pardon, ma'am," said Ben, "it isn't the kind that ladies wears, so you must be mistaken."

"Let me look at it!" she cried. "Oh! let me examine it!"

"Sartinly," he replied, but he took it off reluctantly, feeling a strange presentiment that he was about to lose it.

"Ay, ay, it's bound to go as t'others have," he muttered, as he wistfully as the old lady examined it.

She turned it over and over; suddenly she uttered a strange cry and laid one hand on her heart, while she pressed the cap again and again to her lips.

"Why, bless your eyes, ma'am!" cried Ben, somewhat confused, "it's a nice cap—a comfortable cap; but not good enough to kiss, especially seeing as it's been on *my* head."

"*His!*" cried the old lady, in a voice that made the pulses of the old sailor thrill, "it's *his*—my boy's! Oh! where—*where* did you find it?"

"In the ice, ma'am, while the boats were down."

"Another proof that he lives!" she cried, with wild joy. "Oh! my boy! my boy. This cap must have blown from his head while he was walking somewhere ashore, not far from this very spot! Why, oh! why do I not see him?"

And trembling with joy and excitement, she hurried through the companionway; the cap pressed tightly to her bosom.

"Ay, ay!" cried Ben, when she disappeared. "I knowed I'd lose it—I knowed I'd lose that cap; but I don't care much under present circumstances if it'll give the old lady joy, or help her find her son."

And he rubbed his gray head to keep it warm.

Meanwhile, Martha hurried into the state-room and knocked at her husband's door. He opened it at once, for he had not yet retired. She showed him the cap, but he did not understand her until she pointed to the initial letters T. C., sewed with white thread on the inside lining.

"See. Our boy's name!" she cried. "I sewed on those letters; it was the last thing I did for him, before I left his cabin. The cap is peculiarly made; I knew it the moment I saw it on Rock's head."

"Are you sure?"

"Ay, as sure as I am that his image is here!" she said, laying her hand on her heart. "He is near us—he is near us, Samuel, for that cap has not long been in the water. I can tell by the way it looks."

"I don't know about that," he said gloomily. "I don't know. I have seen cloth of this kind soaked a long time without spoiling. And yet;" he added, feeling of the cap, "it does not seem to have remained long in water."

His heart began to beat with hopes that he had not indulged for a long time. Suddenly, however, they vanished. The cap might have been lost by some whaleman whose name began with the same initials as his son's. He expressed this idea to Martha, but *she* knew her own work, she said; especially work she had done for her boy.

Camp, however, shook his head. Her eyes were weak; she was deceived; how could she recognize a few stitches, years after they were sewed?

"Come!" cried the old lady, "post your lookouts all over the ship; we may see a light or something ashore. I must keep a lookout, too!"

"You?"

"Yes!" her cheeks were flushed, her eyes wild; "you shall hoist me up the mast; I shall watch, and watch, and watch, until I see my boy; my own dear boy!"

"Nay, Martha—"

But she would hear no refusal. The old man was obliged to have the "half-cask" arranged for her accommodation; but fearing that she might get bewildered and fall out, he also entered the conveyance, before he gave the order to "hoist away."

"Ay, ay," muttered Rock, as he watched the two figures ascending, "there they go and the cap with 'em; it was a good cap," he added, wistfully, "a comfortable cap; but if it's her son's, why if it's her son's, of course, ay, of course!"

And he rubbed his cold head more briskly than ever. Soon, however, the steward made his appearance with a sou'-wester which he gave to the old sailor, saying that Martha had told him to do so. Rock was pleased with the hat; it was new, and kept his head very comfortable during the rest of the time he remained at the wheel.

Meanwhile, the old couple in the cask watched the coast to windward, faintly illumined by the rays of the moon. They saw no light—no sign of any human being, and at the end of an hour a thick fog crept around the shores and veiled them from sight.

Then Camp lowered the conveyance, and the two descended into the cabin.

For many hours, Martha remained awake; for many hours the old man's halting step sounded heavily upon the floor of his room as he walked gloomily to and fro.

"This will not do," he muttered. "She will go crazy if she is deprived of her sleep."

He seized a wine-glass from a shelf near his bunk, and poured into it some bitters, with which he mixed a few drops of laudanum. He persuaded the old lady to drink, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing her fall asleep upon a large, comfortable lounge in the cabin. Then, throwing himself upon his own couch, he fell into a broken slumber.

CHAPTER VIII.

CRUISING ALONGSHORE.

Morning dawned cold and foggy. The breeze was light; the Luck, under reefed topsails, forged slowly ahead, grinding the smaller fragments of ice under her bows. Pale and anxious, old Martha stood on the quarter-deck, watching for the mist to clear; while her husband, walking to and fro, occasionally glanced toward her, shaking his head in a significant manner.

In the waist the cooper was very busy with a number of casks that had been hoisted from the main-hold. The clang of his hammer, reminded her of the nailing of a coffin—her heart kept time with every stroke.

All hands were on deck making preparations for "trying out." The mincing machine or "mincing horse," as it is generally termed, was brought forward and lashed to the

stanchions of the weather bulwarks, close to the "tub," which is used to receive the pieces of blubber when cut by the "knife" of the machine. The try-pots were cleared, the red iron chimneys were set upon the works, a mass of shavings and kindling-wood was thrust into the fire-place, then, with arms stripped almost to the shoulder, and his long body attired in a suit of speckled gray, Squid seized his two pronged forks and gave the order to "commence operations."

Then the whirring, whizzing, and clattering of the mincing machine was heard; thick, black volumes of smoke rolled from the chimneys of the try-works, followed by red, roaring columns of flame; and, whistling gaily, Squid commenced tossing the chunks of slashed blubber from the tub into the pots, where they soon began to boil and bubble.

All day long the smoke, mingling with the fog, wrapped the ship in a black shroud, so that the lookout on the bow could not see ten fathoms ahead of him.

Toward night, however, a fresh breeze cleared the mist, and the land was visible scarcely a league to windward.

Begrimed with smoke and oil, their faces lighted by the lurid flames, the men around the try-works looked like so many demons—of whom Squid, armed with his long fork and clad in his speckled suit, was the chief.

Now and then the tall second-mate would pause in his work to glance toward the land, whose rocks and dark trees of pine towered sullen and gloomy in the moonlight.

Suddenly the officer uttered an exclamation of surprise that made the men look up and pause an instant in their work. Squid now jumped upon the rail, and seizing the fore-shroud, leaned eagerly forward, his gaze turned ashore.

"What is it; what do you see?" inquired Trevor, who had just come forward to relieve him.

"There must be a boat's crew ashore" replied Squid; "and yet, we haven't seen any craft up this way. In fact, it's an out o' the way place, which isn't often visited by vessels, that ever I heard of. However, yonder among the rocks, there's either a real light or else a will-o'-the-wisp."

"I see it," answered Trevor. "Now it's gone!" he added, as it suddenly disappeared.

The second-mate climbed half-way up the shrouds.

"I see a faint glimmer yet," said he.

Trevor darted aft and reported to the captain what he had seen.

The skipper had just persuaded the old lady to go below—now both came on deck.

"Where—oh! where is it?" gasped the anxious mother.

"It is my boy's—my boy's light, I know!"

"Gone," said Squid, who now was on the quarter-deck "just gone!"

"That's very strange," said Camp. "I don't understand it at all!"

"Lower a boat and go ashore!" cried Martha. "Quick! there's not a moment to lose. I will go with you!"

The skipper glanced toward the packed fragments of ice between the ship and the shore.

"We can't go, now," said he. "No boat could get through that ice!"

"We *must* go!" cried the old lady. "Yes—yes! My God! to think that you should be willing to put off going for our boy!"

"It can't be helped," he answered, sadly. "Still, if I thought it *was* our son's light, I would take men enough with me to carry a boat across the ice to the clear water beyond!"

"It *is* our son's; it *must* be his; if not, whose is it? I heard you say the other day that ships seldom came up as high as this; so it can't be a boat's crew that—"

"Ay, ay; that's what I think it is; a fire, built by a boat's crew. You know it has been foggy; a ship may have passed us in the mist and anchored behind yonder headland, even though, as I said, vessels seldom come up so high."

"No—no, it is our boy's light," said Martha, positively. "I feel it—I *know* it! A boat must be lowered."

"Well, in order to satisfy *you* I will go. But," he added, gloomily, "you must prepare yourself for disappointment. I, myself, have no idea that the light is in any way connected with our son."

He ordered the starboard boat to be cleared away and lowered.

This was promptly done, when the skipper selected for his crew enough men to drag the light craft over the ice.

Old Martha tottered to the rail to be helped into the boat, but the captain, who was already in the stern sheets, motioned her back.

"*Do let me go!*" she pleaded.

"No," he replied; "we could not get you over the ice. You must stay aboard."

Tears came to her eyes; it grieved her very much to learn that she could not join in the search for her boy.

She stood watching the boat anxiously: it seemed to her as if it would never reach even the inner edge of the ice floe.

At last, however, it glided alongside of the fragments of ice, and its crew jumping out, proceeded to drag the boat over the slippery surface, formed by the closely packed masses.

This was a work of great labor, but it was accomplished in less time than the captain had expected to do it.

"There," said Rock, as the vessel splashed into the clear water; "this puts me in mind of when I was in the bark *Plover*, an English surveying craft. Many and many a time we was forced to drag our boats over the ice. Once, while doing so, I lost a seal-skin cap in a crack of the ice; but the lieutenant with us, takes another out of his pocket and gives to me. I never saw such a man as he was for caps; he always had a pocket full of 'em, which was very fortunate for me as was always a-losin' mine."

The men were now in their places, and the boat flew. In less than a half-hour it struck a sandy beach.

"Now, then, in what quarter was the light?" inquired the captain, turning to Trevor.

The young officer glanced round him, then pointed toward a rocky headland, distant about a hundred yards from where they stood.

By creeping along a narrow ledge, the party were soon on the summit of the rock. They glanced round them in all directions, but could see no sign of a light. Behind them stretched a gloomy low pine forest, on their left, cavernous piles of rocks overlooked the sea.

"You and Squid must have made a mistake," said the skipper, turning to Hal; "there is no sign of a human being here."

The fourth-mate, however, said that he was certain he saw the light from the ship ; so the party moved among the rocks to continue their search.

Suddenly, a cry broke from the foremost man. The rest hurried to his side and saw upon the surface of a flat rock, the yet smoking embers of a large fire !

Now the captain was puzzled ; he scrutinized the ocean and the coast, but no sign of any vessel except his own could be seen.

" This fire, then, was *not* made by a boat's crew ?" he exclaimed. " Who then *could* have built it ?"

As he turned, his foot struck something ; he stooped and picked it up ; it was the stem of a clay pipe.

" They *do* say," remarked Rock, shaking his head, " that there's such things as spirits on this coast, and that they play tricks sometimes on them that ventures so far north ; but I don't believe in 'em much ; especially, I don't believe that it was them that built this fire and smoked this pipe."

" Follow me," said the captain. " We must find the man who built that fire, but I'm sure it isn't my son ; he never smoked."

And he led the way toward the woods.

The whole party were soon near the edge of the forest, when Camp ordered them to shout. This was done, but no reply was heard.

" Light the boat's lantern," said Camp, " we will search the woods."

The lantern soon gleamed, the party entered the forest, shouting occasionally as they proceeded. Still, there came no reply, and after they had walked a long distance without finding the mysterious " fire builder," Camp ordered a return to the boat. Lost in the mazes of the gloomy forest, however, it was a long time before they succeeded in finding the beach. They struck it some distance below the spot where they had left the boat.

" I shall leave three men ashore here to keep watch," said the captain, " while the rest of us return to the ship. In the morning, we will come ashore again, to continue our search."

" Ay, ay, sir, I'll stay ashore for one !" cried Rock, " if you don't object, and—"

He paused, his glance fell upon a singular looking object lying near the edge of the water. He advanced quickly and examined it. It was a human skeleton !

"My God !" cried Camp, as the party gathered around it, "this is fearful, dreadful !"

And the old man pulled his hair and beat his breast in great anguish.

"Don't go on so, sir !" exclaimed Rock, "don't ! I—I—now what you think—I can guess, that is ; but, perhaps you may be mistaken after all."

"No ! no !" cried the captain, "Something seems to tell me that these poor bones are my son's. I remember now that the Portuguese in New-Bedford told me that the body found in the ice had been taken ashore and buried. This is it, I mean the remains of it. The frame is just the length of my son's. Yes ! yes ! fool that I was to doubt it, the dead man found in the ice was my boy. Here he was buried, and the bears, of which there are many on this coast, have dug up his poor remains, and—"

"But the fire ! the fire !" cried Ben, hopefully. "Wait till that's accounted for, and then—then—"

"No," interrupted the old man, in a husky voice, "the man who built that fire could not have been my boy. The pipe, alone, shows it. He disliked tobacco ; it is some other person who is ashore here."

"I've known them that disliked tobacco, at first—" began Ben, but the captain waved his hand impatiently.

"It was constitutional with him," said he, "tobacco smoke will make Mrs. Camp sick. My boy was always affected by it nearly the same way. He could never have used it."

Ben looked puzzled.

"Is the man who built that fire isn't your son, who can he be ? Oars is the first craft up here this season."

"Ay, ay, that fire is something of a mystery, I know," answered Camp. "Still, it might have been made by some wandering Russian. I've heard of those fellows coming as far as this coast."

Stopping, the old man now examined the skeleton carefully, hoping to discover some peculiarity that would prove it was not his son's ; but he was disappointed. The long arms, the

broad frame-work of the chest and head, etc., etc., almost convinced him that he looked upon the remains of the young captain.

"Martha must be told about the skeleton," he said. "She must know how we found it; better she should know the truth at once than live in such terrible suspense!"

Accordingly, leaving three men ashore, the captain returned with the rest to the ship, and, as delicately as he could, reported to his wife the discovery he had made. With her usual perversity, however, where her son was concerned, she refused to believe that the remains were his.

"Alas! Martha, you are too hopeful!"

"Wait until the man who made the fire is found!" she replied, with gleaming eye. "Yes, wait until then, before you tell me that those poor bones were my boy's. He lives," she said, confidently, "Yes, yes, he lives. I *know* it!"

Early the next morning the captain called his boat's crew, and was pulled to the beach.

The three men left ashore had seen no human being besides each other, during the night, although they had kept a good watch.

The captain led his men into the woods a second time; another search was made, but with no better result than before.

"We will go back to the ship," said Camp sadly. "I now have no doubt that the fire was built by some Russian, some poor exile, who is now gone back toward the interior."

The party returned to the beach, the skeleton was carefully buried, and then with a heavy heart the skipper gave the order to pull for the ship.

Martha was almost distracted when she learned that the men had met with no success. She paced the deck with rapid strides, her frame trembling, her eyes gleaming wildly.

Alice endeavored to soothe her, but she did not seem to hear what the young girl said.

"My boy! my boy!" she repeated at intervals, "He must be found; he shall be found."

The captain feared that she would lose her reason. He mixed some more laudanum-drops in a glass of bitters and persuaded her to drink. Soon a drowsiness crept over her.

Alice helped her into the cabin, and was glad to see her sink upon her couch and fall asleep.

"Brace forward the main yard!" shouted the skipper, now on deck.

He was obeyed and the old craft started upon her course. Good lookouts were stationed at the three mastheads. For many hours they scanned the shore with piercing glances, but they saw no sign of a human being. Toward sundown, however, the cry of "on deck there!" came down from the foremasthead.

"Ay! ay!" shouted Camp, "what is it?"

"Something dark on the beach, sir. It *may* be nothing but a rock or the stump of a tree, but—"

"Where away?" interrupted the captain, seizing his spy-glass.

"About a point off the weather beam!"

"I see it! back the main yard! Clear away the starboard boat."

"What do you make it out?" inquired the first officer, while the men were lowering the boat.

"A piece of a wreck, the shattered topmast of some vessel—of the *Norwich*, no doubt!"

Now the boat dropped splashing into the sea, and its crew tumbled into their places.

"Take the steering oar, Trevor," said the skipper, as he seated himself in the stern sheets.

He was so agitated, his hand trembled so much that he could not work the boat.

The fourth-mate seized the oar, and ordered the men to give way. They pulled with a will, and as there now was a clear passage through the ice, they were soon ashore. They crowded around the shattered topmast half buried in the sand, and eyed it with much curiosity.

"Ay, ay," said Camp, mournfully, "I haven't any doubt that this spar was the *Norwich's*. There," he added, pointing to a black circle around the upper part of the mast, "is the ring that I took particular notice of, when I visited the craft before she sailed. I never saw that on the topmast of any other vessel."

"It looks like a sort of 'badger' (badge) of mourning."

said Rock, "like a piece of crape around the arm of a funeral man; I'd have had it scraped off, if the craft had been mine. But, why, my eyes! look there, will ye? What d'ye call them?" he added, pointing along the sand, which bore the faint impression of human footsteps.

"Follow me! follow me, men!" cried Camp, in a voice husky with emotion. "My God, if it should prove, after all, that—But no," he interrupted, "it can not be: I must not indulge such hopes!"

The tracks were lost at the foot of a ledge that wound up the steep sides of a rocky wall, projecting far out into the sea. As nimble as greyhounds, the men darted to the top of the rock, and then a simultaneous cry of surprise broke from the whole party.

About fifty yards ahead of them, upon the beach below, which at this point was curved in the form of a horse shoe, they beheld the hull of a ship! It lay upon its beam ends, the bows half buried in the sand, while the stern and other parts of the lower timbers were washed by the waters of the bay. Walled in, as it were, by steep masses of rocks, projecting into the bay, and only the stumps of its three masts remaining, no wonder it was not visible from the sea beyond.

All along the bottom of the wreck, a thick crust of barnacles had collected, while the exposed side was covered with a sort of gray moss that extended even to the bows. It had also crept up the stern, but not high enough to cover the white background beneath the deadlights, upon which in large black letters the name "Norwich" was still visible. Rock pointed to a rope-ladder which had been rigged forward leading from the ship's rail to the beach; also to a scarcely perceptible column of thin smoke, rising from a pipe that projected from the top of the cabin.

These unmistakable signs made the old captain tremble. Excitement—joy—the fear, too, that he might be disappointed, after all—conspired to weaken him like a child. He was obliged to clutch the shoulder of the young fourth-mate to support himself.

"Men," he faltered, at length, "Shout! for God's sake shout, and follow me!"

With a powerful effort he mastered his agitation and proceeded to descend the rock.

His men following, made the air ring with one wild prolonged cheer; only one; for before they could repeat it a person clad in the faded garb of a sailor, appeared on the deck of the hull. A moment later, he descended the ladder and bounded forward to meet the party.

Soon, both his hands were in those of the old skipper.

"My son! my son! Alive!—thank God!"

"My father! my father!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE HARPOONER'S STORY.

Now the shadows of night were gathering. Old Mart! who, ever since the boat left the ship, had been anxiously watching the coast, could no longer see the land. Turning to the second mate, who was officer of the watch, she requested him to hoist her up in the half-cask, to the mizzen top-gallant mast.

"With the help of the spy-glass, I may see the shore when the moon rises," she said. "At any rate I can get sight of the boat the minute it comes near enough. I feel"—and her eyes filled up—"as if I shall behold my boy before long."

"I wouldn't advise you, ma'am," said Squid, "to go aloft on such a night. It's mighty cold, and you may freeze to death."

"No fear of that," she answered. "I have a good warm cloak. Ah, me!" she continued, mournfully, "if I could only know that my dear boy is as comfortably clad as I am!"

And her longing eyes were again turned shoreward. The second-mate soon had the cask ready: the old lady entered it and was hoisted aloft. A moment later the ship's bell struck, and the second-mate called his relief. This was the third officer.

As he stepped on deck, Squid seized him by the cuff of his coat.

"Keep your weather eye open, Clip; the old lady is aloft and it's an awful cold night. Be sure and lower her to the deck in an hour; that's long enough for any woman to remain aloft in such weather."

"All right," answered Clip, rubbing his half-opened eyes, "I'll bear it in mind."

A quarter of an hour later, by which time he believed that Squid was fast asleep in his bunk, the third-mate entered the cabin and drank deeply from a suspicious-looking bottle taken from his trunk. As a natural consequence, he felt a little giddy when he returned to the deck: so walking forward he seated himself near the blazing tryworks, resting his head against the foremast.

Soon, the warmth of the fire and the buzz and whirr of the mincing-machine conspired to make him feel drowsy; he closed his eyes and dropped to sleep. When he awoke—half an hour later—he had forgotten all about the lady swaying aloft in the cask.

"I've had a strange dream, Tom," he said, turning to the boat-steerer, who was tossing the pieces of minced blabber into one of the try-pots, "a strange dream about that young Camp that we're in search of. I thought, do you see, Tom, that I saw the young fellow as large as life, standing on the top of an iceberg, frozen to death. The berg was drifting toward the ship; it was broad daylight; we could see the young fellow—or his body I should say, quite plainly!"

The boat-steerer, leaning upon his fork, shuddered and drew closer to the fire.

"I don't half like your dream," he said, "although it is not likely it will come true. I don't believe, however, that there is any chance of our finding the poor young fellow—if we find him at all—alive! Living upon this coast is dangerous, on account of the bears."

"Ay, ay; I haven't a doubt that the skeleton seen ashore was that of the young chap. A man has got to have ammunition and plenty of materials for making a fire, if he would pass much time on the Kamitchatka shore."

"Yea. I suppose you have heard of Ben Chapinan, the

poor fellow who was left upon this coast by a boat's crew--"

"Not a word," interrupted Clip, stretching out his arms and settling into an easy position, "not a word. But if you have a story to tell, just commence at the beginning and give me the whole thing; so that I may put it down in my journal. I am keeping a journal, do you see, and like to get hold of interesting facts."

"I will tell you the thing exactly as it happened, and it will show you what little hope there is of our finding young Camp alive."

So saying, the boat-steerer lighted his pipe, after which he proceeded as follows:

A ship called the Raymond—a whaler, of course—entered this sea in 18—, and anchored off a point of land known by the name of Eagle Head. The vessel was commanded by Captain Rose, and contained several good harpooners, among whom was the renowned Ben Chapman—a young man of twenty-three, who could fling an iron to the distance of seven fathoms without missing his aim. Already he had struck five large whales; and the captain had promised that if he should be the first to plant an iron into the sixth, he (the captain) would give him the hand of his pretty daughter, Mary, a Nantucket lass whom Chapman had loved since his boyhood, but who had been refused him by the father on account of his (Ben's) poverty.

Well, you can judge of the feelings of the lover when shortly after the skipper had made the agreement I have spoken of, whales were sighted off the lee bow. The young harpener had his boat ready in a twinkling, and pulling from his pocket an artificial rose—a present from Mary—which he had hitherto never dared to wear before the captain, he fastened it to his jacket for good luck. The boats were soon speeding over the water at a great rate—Ben's the foremost as it generally was; for it contained some of the best oarsmen that ever pulled.

The whales, however, were now gone down; so, after pulling a short distance, the order to "lie" (stop) was given by the officers. Soon, however, the whale-spouts were seen about a league ahead, when the men again took to their oars. They had not proceeded far, however, when a heavy fog,

which for some time had been creeping over the water, settled around them. As a natural consequence, the boats got separated. The whales now were heard spouting on all sides, but not one was seen until an hour later, when, directly ahead of his boat, Chapman beheld a huge monster with a bump on its back like a hillock covered with oyster shells. The best-steerer jumped up, and with his usual luck, succeeded in planting two irons into the leviathan's body.

The crew cheered as they backed water; a moment later, the boat was tearing through the sea at a tremendous rate.

The face of the harpooner beamed with joy, as he changed places with his officer. He (Ben) now felt sure of his Mary; he had struck the sixth whale, and the captain would smile upon his suit.

Onward flew the boat—on—on—with undiminished speed, for a full half-hour, when up rose the monster far ahead. The men hauled line; but before a lance could be thrown, down went the mighty creature, dragging the boat with the same swiftness as before.

Another half hour passed, when the monster again came up. This time the officer succeeded in planting a lance into its side; but only once; for down went the huge animal again, tearing along through the green depths of its ocean home with tremendous velocity. Soon, however, the whale showed signs of weakness. When he rose the third time, he dashed his flakes right and left, making the water fly around him in clouds of whirling spray.

"Haul line!" was the order, and the boat was drawn alongside of the animal.

The officer was an excellent whalerman; he worked his long lance with tremendous rapidity, so that the leviathan soon began to spout blood.

A minute later it rolled over, quite dead.

"Now then, where is the ship?—that's the question," said the officer, as all hands lighted their pipes.

It was impossible to tell; the fog was very thick, and there was no sign of its clearing. As there was a strong current running, the kedge was hauled forth, and boat and whale were anchored; the mate having resolved to wait until the fog should clear before he gave the order for towing.

Two hours later, one of the men pointed ahead ; something dark was seen looming through the mist.

The crew thought it was the ship, but they soon discovered their mistake ; it was a rock, forming the extremity of a high promontory.

"I had not dreamed that we were so near the coast!" cried the officer of the boat.

"I think we must have been two miles from it when we first anchored," said Chapman, "but the current has been carrying us along, in spite of our kedge, with great rapidity, and yet without our perceiving it."

"We must get ashore, then, and secure our whale to yonder rock before we are carried off any farther," remarked the officer.

Accordingly, the men "took to" their oars and the boat soon struck the shore. A line was made fast to two parts of the whale, and was secured around a rocky spur.

Having hauled up their boat, the crew kindled a fire, and were soon sitting around the blaze, smoking their pipes, spinning yarns, and otherwise amusing themselves.

The long hours were whiled pleasantly away ; still there was no sign of the fog clearing ; so, as the evening shadows gathered round them, the men went to work and erected a snug little hovel. In this they passed the night ; when they rose in the morning, the mist had begun to clear.

"The ship can not be far from us," said the officer of the boat. "Who will volunteer to stay here and keep an eye on the whale, while I go with the rest of the men to look for the ship?"

"I will stay," answered Chapman, perceiving that none of the oarsmen spoke.

"All right," said the mate, "we'll come back for you in a short time."

So saying, he sprung into his boat, which soon after disappeared from Chapman's gaze.

The men pulled in many different directions for several hours ; but no sign of the ship could be discovered, until the fog had entirely lifted.

Then the vessel was seen far away to the westward ; so far off, in fact, that only the tops of her masts were visible.

The crew cheered, and again seizing their oars, pulled with such vigor that they were soon alongside the craft. Her anchor was lifted, her topsails sheeted and hoisted, and away she went, booming along before a fresh breeze, in the direction of the coast where Chapman had been left. The other harpooners had not met with any success; two had darted at a whale, but had missed it. Their boats had returned to the ship shortly after the fog settled around them.

"Ben is a good lad," said the skipper, rubbing his hands. "and he shall have the lass he wants; ay, ay, he shall have her with my best wishes, for getting me my sixth whale in such gallant style!"

He seized his glass and swept the coast as the vessel boomed on; but he was unable to see either the whale or the boat-steerer.

"This is strange!" he said, turning to the mate, "very strange; are you sure we are going in the right direction?"

"Sure of it," answered the mate. "I noted the bearings with the boat compass."

So saying, he took the glass and scrutinized the shore.

"Do you see anything?" inquired the captain, anxiously.

"Nothing yet, except the rocks, and—ah, there it is! there's the whale!" he interrupted. "You can't hardly see it, as the rock alongside of which it lies is black with seaweed."

"And do you see Chapman?"

"No; he's probably hid from our sight by some rock behind which he is seated."

"I should think he would make his appearance to signal us."

"So should I; we'll see him in a few minutes."

He was mistaken; no sign of the boatswain could be discovered from the ship. The captain—all hands, in fact—were much surprised.

"It can not be that he has fallen asleep?" said the skipper.

"No," replied the mate, "Chapman is not the man to go to sleep at his post; neither would he be likely to leave it."

The captain turned pale.

"I hope nothing has happened to the poor lad!" he gasped.

"both for his own and Mary's sake. I believe the girl would go mad if she should hear that—"

"No, no," interrupted the mate. "Chapman is all right, I'll warrant you. He has a spice of roguery in his nature, I know, and he is probably even now crouching behind some one of those spurs of rock, just to make us wonder what become of him."

"God grant that you are right. I think, however, that we had better send a boat ashore, and investigate the matter as soon as we can."

Accordingly the main-yard was hauled aback, and the starboard boat was soon speeding toward the beach.

"Ben!" shouted the skipper, when the light craft was within a few fathoms of the shore, "Ben! show yourself; you've played your joke long enough—come, jump up from behind that rock!"

There was no answer; the shore caverns mockingly echoed back the captain's voice; and a large flock of birds suddenly rose, shrieking from behind one of the rocky walls.

A moment later, the boat's keel struck the sand, and leaping out, the crew ran hither and thither searching for the harpooner.

Suddenly, one of the men who had climbed a rocky platform, uttered an exclamation of astonishment and dismay. His shipmates were soon upon the rock, when looking down on the other side, they beheld the remains of poor Chapman; a mere heap of bones from which the flesh had been torn by the ravenous teeth of bears. The tracks of the animals were observed here and there upon the sand; the poor harpooner must have been attacked by a dozen of them at once.

"I thought so," gasped the skipper, as he picked up the artificial rose which the young man had worn in his jacket. "I felt a presentiment that the poor lad was dead. Oh, what will become of my child when she hears the fearful news?"

I have but little more to relate. The remains were buried in the sand, and a stone was rolled over them to mark the spot, after which with heavy hearts the party towed the whale to the ship.

"And what became of Mary?"

"She did not live to hear the sad news. She died, fortunately, (of a fever,) while the dark tidings were being borne toward her native shores."

CHAPTER X

"RATS."

To return to the party on the beach. The young captain conducted his friends into the cabin of the old wreck. It was comfortably furnished; there was a cooking stove in the center of the room, upon which some salt meat was boiling in a large tin kettle.

"For fifteen months," said the young sailor, laughing, "I have been my own cook. I have been quite comfortable in this old hull. There are still provisions enough in the hold to last one man for three or even five years."

"It was thought that the craft went to pieces!" said old Rock. "Nobody, until now, ever had any idea that she was beached in such a snug way as this, which is certainly a very comfortable way of being wrecked!"

"The bay was full of ice, when the vessel struck," said the narrator. "She made a terrible crashing and I thought that she was going to pieces. Her three masts went by the board, and her timbers were cracked in many places; but, as she did not touch the rocks her hull was not much damaged; the ice had checked her speed before she was driven on the beach. The steward, an unfortunate creature who could not speak a word, owing to the loss of his tongue when he was a boy, stood by my side when the masts went over. He had been unable to get into the boats; and being of a timid disposition, he now clung to me like a child, and fairly screamed with terror, as the spars fell crashing around us. I calmed his fears as well as I could, and helped him descend to the beach. Then, we were glad to perceive by the light of the lantern I had brought with me, that the bow and keel of the

vessel were firmly wedged in the sand and mud. The bay being here sheltered by rocks, the wreck was protected from the full force of the gale and the heavy seas.

"I will go with my lantern to the top of that rock!" I said, pointing to the cliff behind us, "so as to signal the boats, while you remain here and watch for them."

"He consented, and I started for the top of the cliff. Unfortunately, it was too steep to be scaled. I entered a narrow gully that divides it, and hurried along hoping that I should soon discover a ledge or some path by which I could reach it. I was disappointed. After proceeding a long distance, I found myself among a succession of sloping hills, and vainly searched for the right way to the summit of the peak. While doing so, I suddenly found myself among trees of pine. I endeavored to retrace my way, but failed; and I was soon lost in the mazes of a thick forest. I moved hither and thither, but in the darkness I could not of course see the right path. It seemed to me that I plunged deeper and deeper into the woods every moment. I kept on, however, until daylight, when I was obliged to pause from sheer fatigue. In the morning, I continued on, but the forest seemed boundless. I could not find the sea-shore. Well, my friends, to make my story short I will briefly inform you that two days elapsed before I succeeded in finding my way back to the wreck. I was faint with fatigue and hunger. I crawled aboard the old hull, and was surprised to discover that the steward was gone. After eating, however, I noticed a note lying on the cabin table, directed to me. I opened it and perceived that it was written by the steward. In case I returned before he did, I might know that he had started in search of me—he was unable to account for my strange disappearance. Such was the substance of the note."

"Ah!" interrupted old Camp, "now I know the meaning of those two letters 'd' written on the slip of paper. They were the first two letters of 'disappeared'; 'your son disappeared' and not 'your son died' is what the poor Honblain camp would have written had he lived long enough. But go ahead, my boy, with your story," he added, as the young man eyed him with a puzzled, inquiring look, "I will explain when you get through."

"Well," continued the narrator, "the steward never came back; what became of him is more than I can tell. I searched for him for several days, but was unable to find him. I have always thought, however, that he was fortunate enough to be picked up by some outward-bound vessel which, owing to the ice, could not get to the wreck. A few nights after his disappearance, I was standing upon the headland—from which you spied the wreck—when I saw a ship booming through the water, evidently not more than a quarter of a mile from the beach. As there was a light fog at the time, I didn't think I was seen, although I shouted to attract attention.

"Ay, ay, you *were* seen," cried the old man, "by the mate of the Commerce; but the captain thought he was deceived; and therefore took no notice of the matter. The vessel I speak of is the same that picked up a dead body on the ice which, from the description, I have until now felt almost convinced was yours; especially as a guernsey with a blue anchor worked on the sleeves and an ivory ring—"

"Ay, ay, I understand," interrupted the young captain, "the body found was that of a man washed overboard before we struck. A few days previously, the poor fellow having lost his jacket, I made him a present of the guernsey frock. As to the ring, he had borrowed it from me to serve as a pattern for one that *he* was making."

"How about the cap?" said old Rock, "did you lose a Scotch cap lately, my lad?"

"Yes; about three days ago, it was blown from my head into the sea while I stood upon a projecting rock, watching for a vessel, as I've watched every day for the last fifteen months except when on a bear-hunt. Ships seldom visit this out-of-the-way locality. I've seen three or four, it's true, since I was wrecked, but they were too far off to be signalled."

"Ay, ay, now I'll wager a pound of 'tobaccy,' mate, that you kindled a fire toother night among the rocks about ten miles below here?"

"You're right. It was a rough night. I had been on a week's hunt without meeting with any luck, and feeling tired and hungry, I kindled the fire to roast some salt meat which remained in my canvas haversack. After I had finished my meal and smoked my pipe—I use dry sage, not tobacco—I

continued on my way toward the wreck. But why did you ask?"

The old skipper explained, after which the party proceeded to the boat. On their way to the Luck, their progress was often retarded by heavy fragments of ice that had drifted back with the wind of tide. On this account, several hours elapsed before they succeeded in getting on board. The night was very cool, and the captain at once hurried his son into the cabin.

He placed me round him, and I was much surprised at discovering that Martha was not present.

"It is very strange," said he; "she was awake when I left the ship. I saw her come on deck just as the boat glided off."

He advanced to the door of Alice's room and knocked; then drew back.

"I forgot," said he. "About an hour before I left the vessel I gave the poor girl a drug to make her sleep; and sound asleep she is I'll warrant you. She needs it badly enough, for she had not slept for two or three nights, on your mother's account."

"Alice was always a good girl," said the young officer. "I would not have you disturb her for the world; but where can my mother be?"

"Perhaps we can find out on deck," said the old man. "Come."

They were soon on deck, when the skipper went forward and confronted Clip, the officer of the watch, who was now superintending the work of tying out.

"Where is she—where is my wife?"

"Good God!" cried the third-mate, and he darted aft like a shot. "I forgot all about it!"

"Forgot what?" inquired the old man, who with his son had followed the speaker.

"About dark, it seems, she asked the second-mate, who was then officer of the watch, to hoist her to the mizzen top-gallant mast in the half-cask," replied Clip, "as she wanted to watch for the return of the boat. Well, he did hoist her up, and when I came on deck, a quarter of an hour after, to relieve him, he told me to be sure and lower the old lady to the deck an hour later, as it was very uncomfortable up so far

aloft on a cold night. I promised and—Last me for a lubber, I shall never forgive myself—I forgot all about it.”

“My God! she is dead,” cried the skipper, seizing the cold hand of the old lady; “she is frozen to death!”

A cry of anguish burst from the young man. He gazed wildly upon the still form of his mother seated in the cask, with closed eyes and drooping head.

“Dead! dead!” he moaned, “it can not—*can not* be! Mother! Oh! mother!” he called, “speak to me; I am here—your long-lost son!”

But there was no reply; the lips were motionless; the drooping lashes rose not from the white, wrinkled cheek.

The captain laid his hand upon her heart.

“I think it beats a little,” he said; “but—but—perhaps it is only the trembling of my hand!”

The three men carried her into the cabin. She was laid upon the sofa, where to the surprise and joy of those present, she opened her eyes. She had not been frozen. She had fainted, a few minutes previously, from excitement and fatigue.

Now she sprung up; her eyes were fixed upon the face of her son—she knew him at once. With a wild, tremulous cry of joy, she folded him to her breast.

“My boy! my boy! my dear boy!”

She smoothed his hair; she kissed him again and again. She clung to him as if she could not bear that he should ever go an arm’s-length away from her.

She was happy, far happier than mortal pen can express.

No sleep for her *that* night.

In the morning the trunk was pulled from its corner and all the “best clothes,” neatly folded and brushed, were displayed to their owner, by his fond parent.

“There!” she said pointing to his broadcloth suit, “*they* will do for you to get married in!”

And she looked quite mischievous

“Married?”

“Yes, you and Alice were always very fond of each other, I believe!”

“What! our Alice?”

“Certainly. You have not seen her since you came aboard. She has greatly improved.”

A minute later the young girl entered the state-room. The captain sprung forward to meet her; both greeted each other like brother and sister who have long been separated, and are very glad to meet again.

"You may thank H. J. Trevor, our fourth-mate, that Alice and your mother are living," said the old skipper, rubbing his hands gleefully.

And he went on to describe the daring manner in which the young man had rescued them while they hung suspended in the "half-cask," on the day of the squall. During the recital Alice paled and flushed by turns; her eyes beamed with a soft light.

The young captain noticed her emotion, and drew his own conclusions.

Soon after he went on deck. His mother and Alice remained below to prepare for him a "nice" breakfast. He walked to the weather-rail, and stood watching Trevor, who was at work on a block in the waist.

Suddenly, feeling a hand upon his shoulder, he turned, and was surprised to see Rock.

The old tar scraped his foot and bowed.

"It's hoping you won't feel offended," said he. "I've come to see ye about that cap."

"What cap?"

"Why, sir; the Scotch cap—bless your eyes. I had it on my head t'other night, when your mother comes and takes it off, giving me this instead."

And he touched the sou'wester.

"Well?"

"Ay, ay, sir; but it isn't 'well,' it's a sight too heavy, d've seen? Besides which, I kind o' set my heart on that Scotch cap. Now, sir, if you'd just as lief as not, I'd like to change off with you, giving you the sou'wester for the Scotch cap."

"Certainly," replied Camp. "I will go down and get the cap at once."

He did so.

"There it is," he said. "You may have it and welcome. Keep your sou'wester, too, my friend."

"Thank ye," said Rock, as he adjusted the cap on his gray

head. "It's a mighty comfortable cap, and I'll never forget your kindness."

Then he seraped his foot again, and thrusting an enormous piece of tobacco into his mouth, stood still, his hands in his pocket, his legs spread out like an open compass.

"There's one thing more I'd like to speak to ye about," he said, at last—"and that, to come to the p'int at once, is love!"

"Love?"

"Ay, ay—that's it. There's a chum of mine who is smitten with a pretty lass in this ship, Miss Alice. He's mighty fond of her, do you see, and—"

"Who is he?"

"Hal Trevor, the fourth-mate; and, unless I'm much mistaken she likes him, too. Sich being the case, I'd ask you as a great favor, providing *your* affections isn't too much engaged, to give Miss Alice to my chum, instead of marrying her yourself!"

"My dear friend," said Camp, smiling; "love isn't to be banded about and traded off like a Scotch cap. However, I will think of your proposition."

The old tar bowed, and grinning with pleasure, walked forward, descending to the fore-castle to dispose of his extra hat. An exclamation followed, then a queer whistle, then a loud laugh, and the old tar actually executed a few steps of the Sailor's Hornpipe, to the amazement of two or three men in their bunks.

Hearing the noise, the fourth-mate peered down the ladder. "What's up, there, old chum?" he asked.

"Rats, rats, rats!" he shouted, and came up on deck, with a face all aglow with happiness. "I saw him—a roasting, roasting rat—down there by the chest, as sure as you're a sober man."

It was so. By the chest was found a big she-rat. Whence it came no one could tell. But it was a rat, and the fore-castle was as happy over the discovery as if a half-dozen big whales had been secured in one race.

The "Luck" was unlucky no longer!

Breakfast being ready, the young captain entered the cabin. When the meal was finished he turned to the steward.

"Go and tell Trevor to come here."

The man obeyed, and the fourth-mate soon appeared.

Young Camp led him to the side of the blushing Alice, and joined the hands of the two.

"Be happy," he said; "both of you. I forego all claims to this young girl, and am glad to surrender her to one so worthy of the prize."

"Why, Thomas—" exclaimed Mrs. Camp; but he checked her with a smile and a wave of the hand.

"They love each other," said he, "whereas, Alice and I always look toward each other like a brother and sister. I would like always to feel that she is a sister to me."

"Is that so, Alice?" inquired Mrs. Camp. "Do you love this fourth-mate better than my son?"

She darted forward and laid her blushing cheek upon the old lady's breast.

"Forgive me," she murmured, almost inaudibly; "forgive me, I do love Hal—I loved him even before I knew it. Forgive me!"

"My dear child, there is nothing to forgive. I would not, of course, wish you to marry my son unless you could love him with your whole soul. You have been a dear, good girl to me, and God will bless you and make you happy."

Trevor advanced and seized both hands of young Camp.

"How can I ever repay you, sir, for such kindness? You have made a happy man of me for ever."

"I have made no sacrifice," replied the other, smiling, "and, therefore, deserve no thanks."

On the next day, the Luck was anchored off the bay, about seventy fathoms from the Norwich; and some of the hands were at once set to work breaking out the cargo in the old wreck. In about a month, the latter was cleared of every thing it contained, which was transferred to the hold of the other vessel.

In this way, old Camp obtained two thousand five hundred barrels of good oil without having to lower a single boat "on the chase."

Accordingly, he now squared his yards with a light heart; and away went the old Luck a full ship and homeward-bound!

Rock's predictions were not verified ; he had made his will for nothing ; the vessel arrived safely in New Bedford after a rather long passage of eight months.

Trevor and Alice were married, a few months later, by Mr. Mill. Rock was present, wearing the Scotch cap, and pants of spotless duck. He danced with a superannuated widow who found it very difficult to keep step with him, and afterward wished to know what "kind of a waltz *that* was?"

"Why, bless your eyes ma'am," answered Rock, "it was a *hornpipe*."

Trevor, after his marriage, performed a number of voyages as captain of an East India vessel. At last, however, having accumulated funds enough to satisfy him, he complied with the request of his wife, who had long wished him to give up the calling of a sailor, and purchased a comfortable estate where he now lives, happy and contented, with his wife and children.

Young Camp married, too—sweet Mary Hall, for whom he had always entertained a lover's regard, becoming the light of his beautiful sea-side home.

"Little did I think," said the old man, while he sat by Martha's side, one evening, on the piazza of their son's house, watching the happy husband and his wife strolling past "little did I think, a few years ago, that your prophecy would come true ; that we should really find our boy."

"I knew we should," replied the old lady.

"Yes, but upon what grounds were you so confident?"

Martha smiled ; then pointing skyward, she said in a sweetly solemn voice :

"WHERE HER CHILDREN ARE CONCERNED, A TRUE MOTHER IS ALWAYS INSPIRED !"

THE END.

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<p> <i>The Muses.</i> For nine young ladies. <i>The Englishman.</i> For three boys. <i>The Coronation.</i> For male and female. <i>The Fashion.</i> For two ladies. <i>The Rehearsal.</i> For six boys. <i>Which will you Choose!</i> For two boys. <i>The Queen of May.</i> For two little girls. <i>The Tea Party.</i> For four ladies. <i>Three Scenes in Wedded Life.</i> Male and female. <i>Mrs. Sniffles' Confession.</i> For male and female. <i>The Mission of the Spirits.</i> Five young ladies. </p>	<p> <i>Hobnobbing.</i> For five speakers. <i>The Secret of Success.</i> For three speakers. <i>Young America.</i> Three males and two females. <i>Josephine's Destiny.</i> Four females, one male. <i>The Folly of the Duel.</i> For three male speakers. <i>Dogmatism.</i> For three male speakers. <i>The Ignorant Confounded.</i> For two boys. <i>The Fast Young Man.</i> For two males. <i>The Year's Reckoning.</i> 12 females and 1 male. <i>The Village with One Gentleman.</i> For eight females and one male. </p>
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DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 2.

<p> <i>The Genius of Liberty.</i> 2 males and 1 female. <i>Cinderella; or, The Little Glass Slipper.</i> <i>Doing Good and Saying Bad.</i> Several characters. <i>The Golden Rule.</i> Two males and two females. <i>The Gift of the Fairy Queen.</i> Several females. <i>Taken Is and Done For.</i> For two characters. <i>The Country Aunt's Visit to the City.</i> For several characters. <i>The Two Romans.</i> For two males. <i>Frying the Characters.</i> For three males. <i>The Happy Family.</i> For several 'animals.' <i>The Rainbow.</i> For several characters. </p>	<p> <i>How to Write 'Popular' Stories.</i> Two males. <i>The New and the Old.</i> For two males. <i>A Sensation at Last.</i> For two males. <i>The Greenhorn.</i> For two males. <i>The Three Men of Science.</i> For four males. <i>The Old Lady's Will.</i> For four males. <i>The Little Philosophers.</i> For two little girls. <i>How to Find an Heir.</i> For five males. <i>The Virtues.</i> For six young ladies. <i>A Connubial Eclogue.</i> <i>The Public meeting.</i> Five males and one female. <i>The English Traveler.</i> For two males. </p>
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DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 3.

<p> <i>The May Queen.</i> For an entire school. <i>Dress Reform Convention.</i> For ten females. <i>Keeping Bad Company.</i> A Farce. For five males. <i>Courtship Under Difficulties.</i> 2 males, 1 female. <i>National Representatives.</i> A Burlesque. 4 males. <i>Escaping the Draft.</i> For numerous males. </p>	<p> <i>The Genteel Cook.</i> For two males. <i>Masterpiece.</i> For two males and two females. <i>The Two Romans.</i> For two males. <i>The Same. Second scene.</i> For two males. <i>Showing the White Feather.</i> 4 males, 1 female. <i>The Battle Call.</i> A Recitative. For one male. </p>
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DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 4.

<p> <i>The Frost King.</i> For ten or more persons. <i>Starting in Life.</i> Three males and two females. <i>Faith, Hope and Charity.</i> For three little girls. <i>Darby and Joan.</i> For two males and one female. <i>The May. A Floral Party.</i> For six little girls. <i>The Enchanted Princess.</i> 2 males, several females. <i>Victor to Whom Honor is Due.</i> 7 males, 1 female. <i>Gentle Client.</i> For several males, one female. <i>Eclogue.</i> A Discussion. For twenty males. </p>	<p> <i>The Stubbetown Volunteer.</i> 2 males, 1 female. <i>A Scene from "Paul Pry."</i> For four males. <i>The Charms.</i> For three males and one female. <i>Bee, Clock and Broom.</i> For three little girls. <i>The Right Way.</i> A Colloquy. For two boys. <i>What the Ledger Says.</i> For two males. <i>The Crimes of Dress.</i> A Colloquy. For two males. <i>The Reward of Benevolence.</i> For four males. <i>The Letter.</i> For two males. </p>
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